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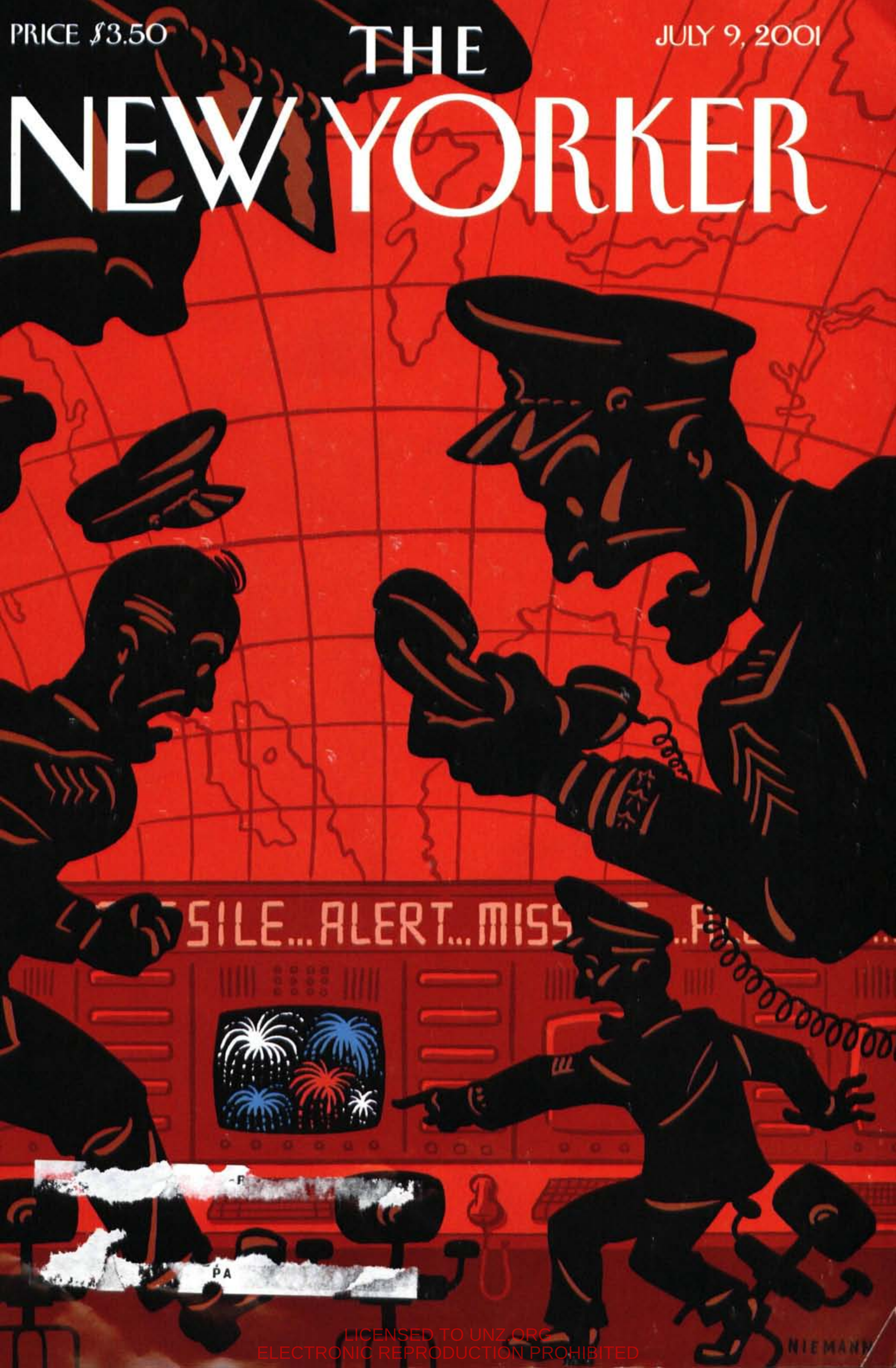
THE NEW YORKER



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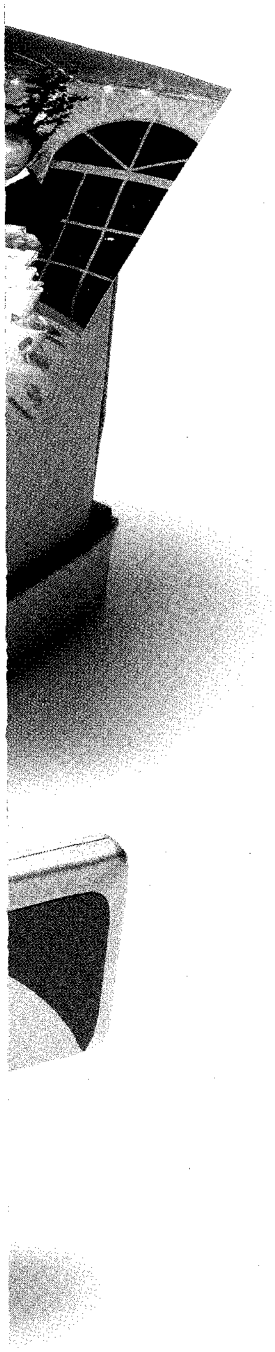

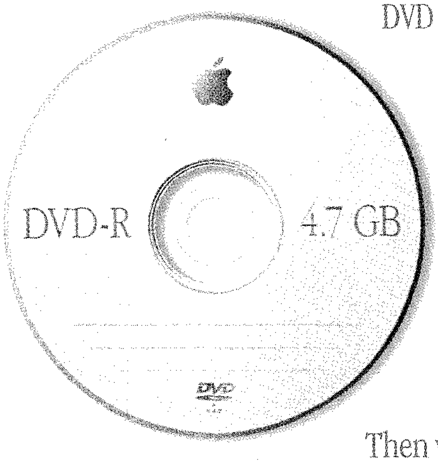

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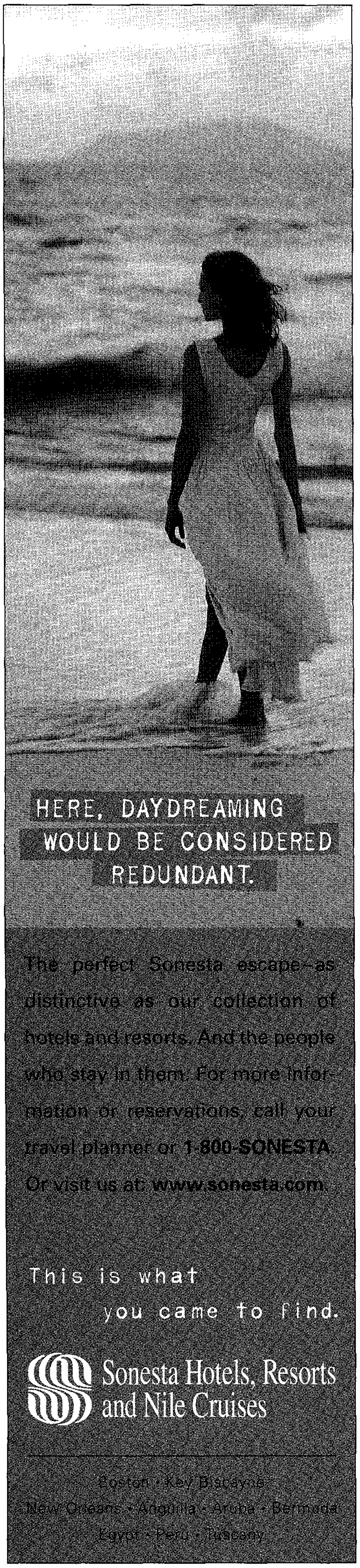

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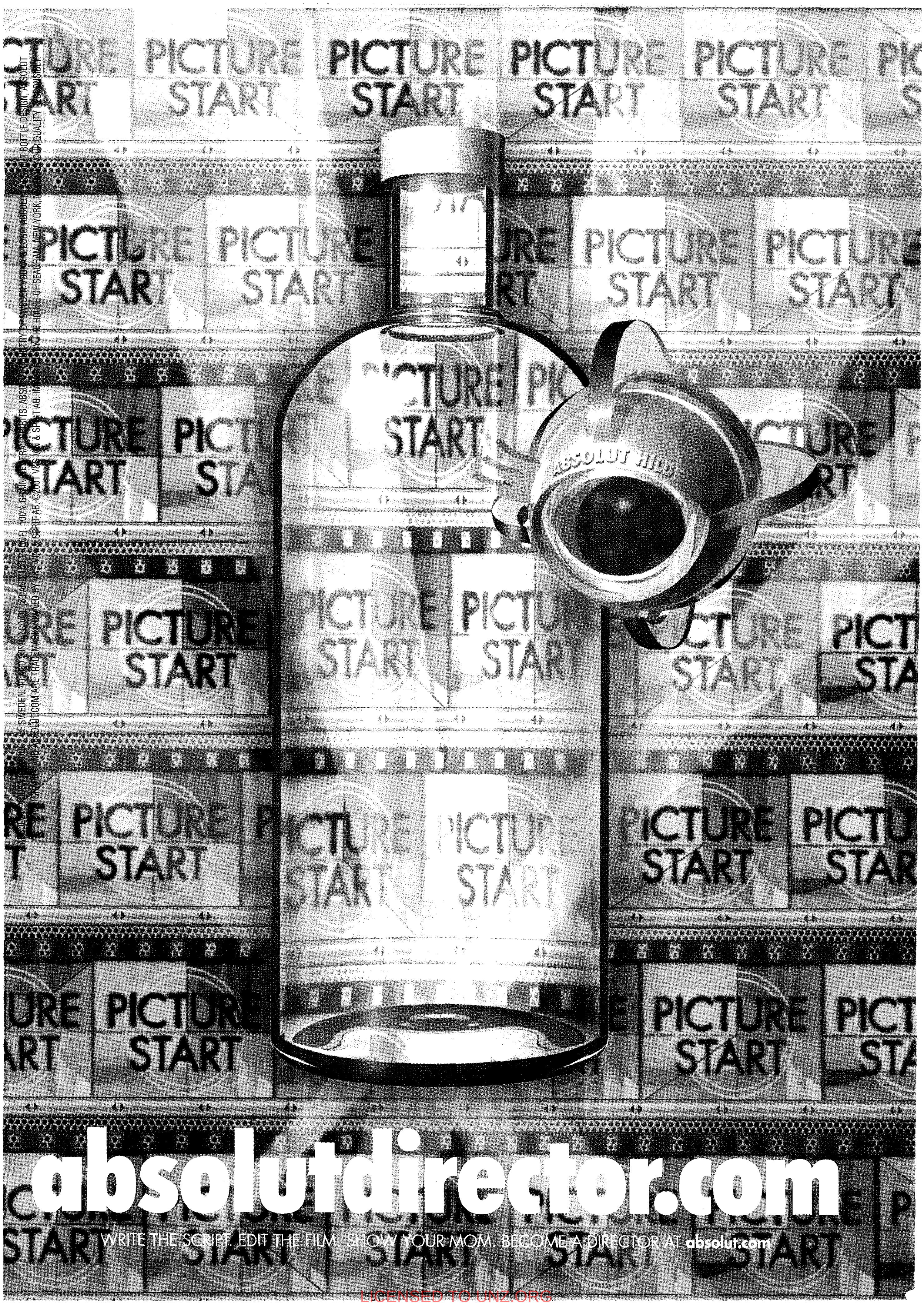
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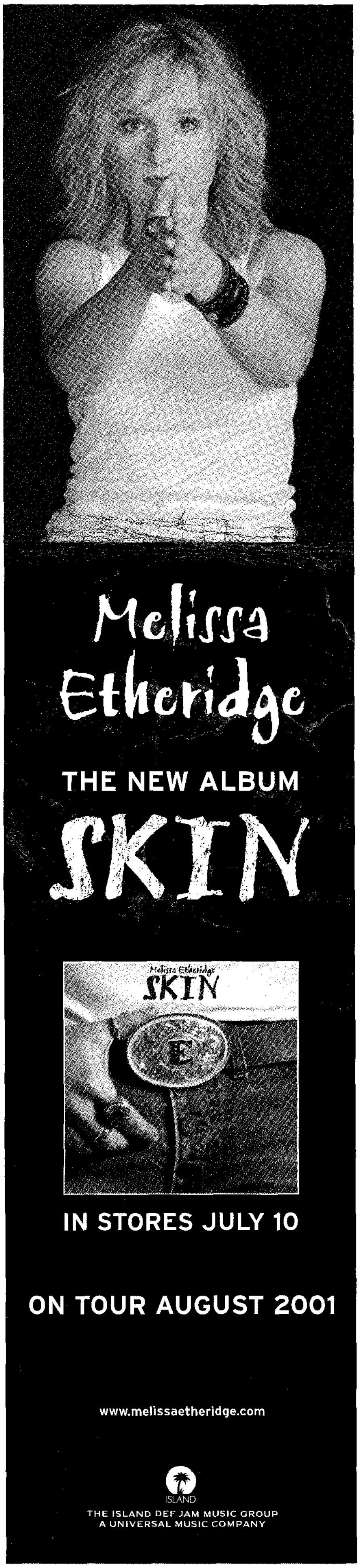

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Marc Nesbitt (Fiction, p. 76) will publish his first book, a collection of short stories, next spring.

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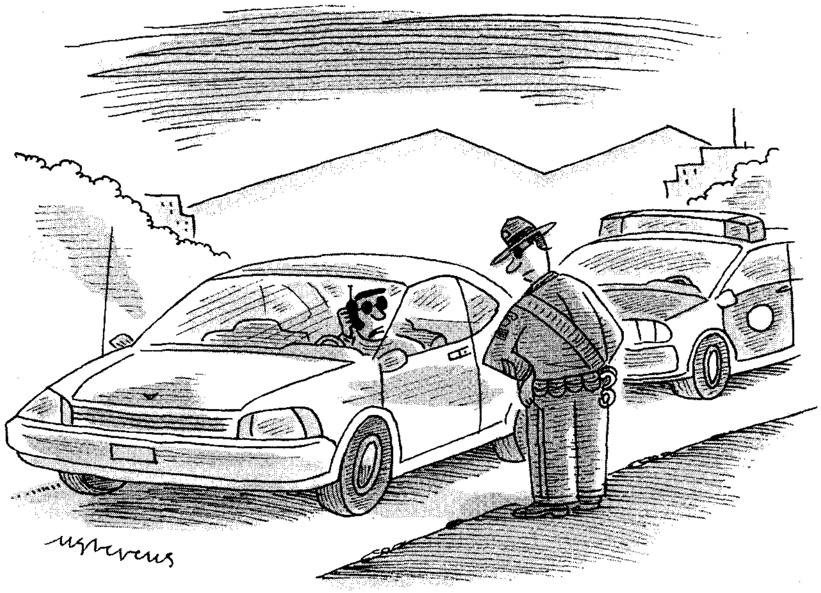

"Now I'm calling my lawyer."

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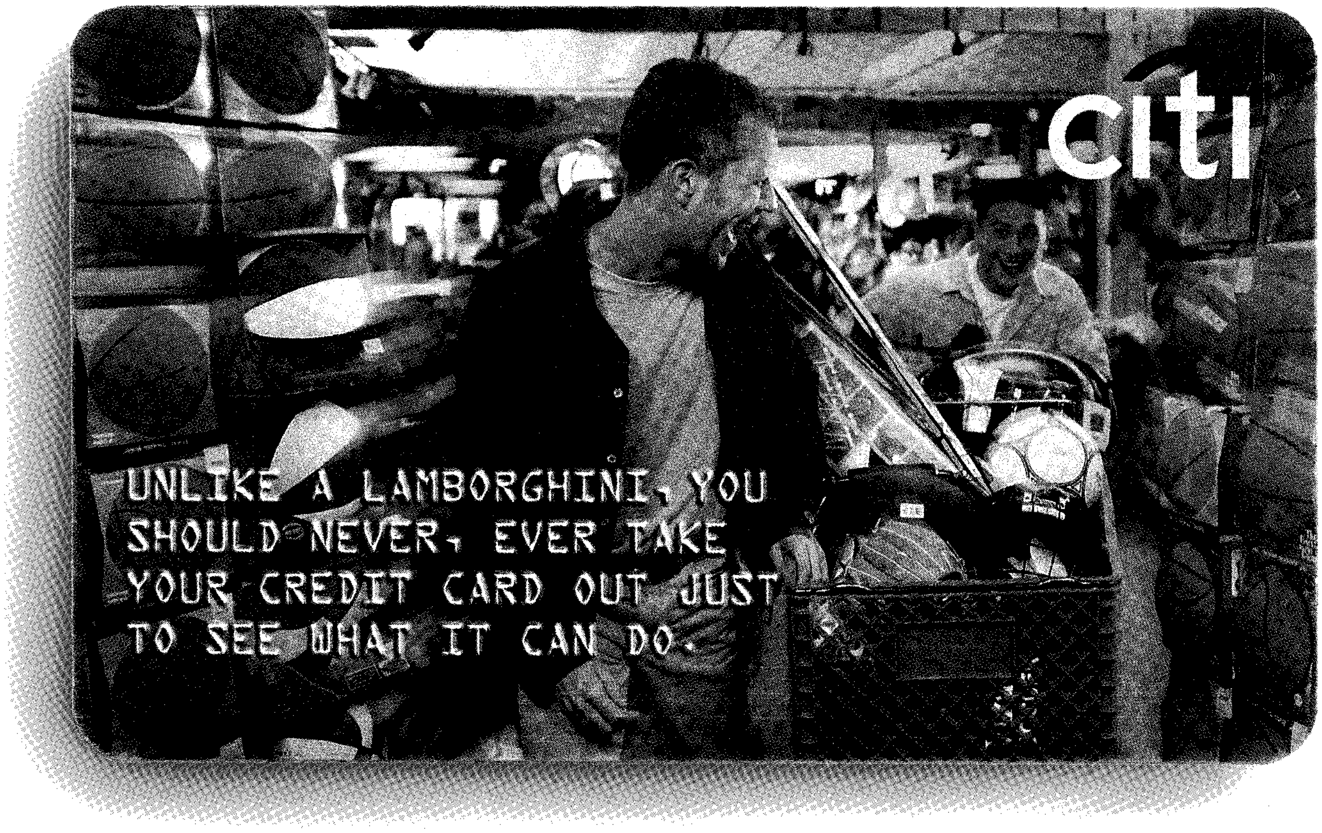
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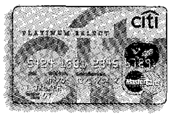
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THE MAIL

CARS AND DRIVERS

Malcolm Gladwell suggests that my advocacy of air bags impeded an increased usage of seat belts ("Wrong Turn," June 11th), ignoring the chief obstacle in our struggle for highway safety: auto companies. I began my efforts in the mid-nineteen-fifties. The essential device we pressed on industry refuseniks was the seat belt. Not until the mid-sixties did U.S. auto companies, compelled by state laws, attach standard lap belts. At every stage, it took government action to force them to make basic improvements such as a combined lap belt and shoulder harness and a three-point back-seat belt. That I didn't think as many Americans would buckle up as do now doesn't mean I failed to support seat-belt-use laws. But I didn't want auto companies to use them as trade-offs, beating back passive safety technology like air bags, collision-avoidance systems, and upgrades to outdated standards for crash-worthiness. Gladwell asserts I didn't have faith in the people I was trying to protect. He is wrong. I have fought for combined passive-active safety systems for years—to give drivers better control, along with a better chance of surviving a crash, due to improved engineering.
Ralph Nader
Washington, D.C.

Gladwell charges that, as administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, I promoted air bags and other passive safety measures to the detriment of seat belts. I have always supported both seat belts and built-in safety. At N.H.T.S.A., I launched a campaign to pass state child-restraint laws and to ignite cultural change in a climate hostile to belt-use laws. By 1985, all states passed them, opening the door for adult belt laws. Gladwell mischaracterizes the record and uses distorted logic. The U.S. actually has low rates of traffic deaths compared with many other nations; fatalities have declined seventy per cent since 1966. Gladwell admits that human error in driving is pervasive, but, in failing to note that the driver in the 1994 crash he discusses was violating New Jersey's belt law, he gets the lesson backward. Although a law didn't change that driver's risky behavior, enhanced side-impact air bags and structural protection might have saved his life.
Joan Claybrook, President
Public Citizen
Washington, D.C.

Gladwell's article is insightful and thorough, but could I offer a further view? I did not "discover" William Haddon. I was a vector—he would use such a term—by which he discovered the world of politics. In 1959, Haddon and I organized a conference, perhaps the first ever on automobile trauma as a public-health issue. The next year, I got a plank in the Democratic platform. By the mid-nineteen-sixties, we had an agency, with Haddon as its head. The issue had been correctly defined. This is what mattered—not the ups and downs that followed. Fifty years ago, cars didn't have "crashes." Drivers had "accidents." Haddon did this.
Daniel Patrick Moynihan
Washington, D.C.

Gladwell argues that seat-belt use in the U.S. could have been more than eighty per cent if only Haddon, Nader, and Claybrook had done more to promote seat-belt laws. But, even with laws, the U.S. differs from other countries he cites, on attitudes toward big government, guns, voting—and seat belts. The truth is that few have fought harder for seat belts than these three giants in the field.
Judith Lee Stone, President
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
Washington, D.C.

Gladwell writes that advocates of air bags made a "mistake," while automakers correctly "argued that the emphasis ought to be on seat belts." But he doesn't mention that car companies failed to support seat-belt laws for years, or the reason for their conversion. In 1983, the Supreme Court upheld a federal mandate for passive restraints in new cars. A loophole provided that, if enough states passed comprehensive belt-use laws by a deadline, the rule would be dropped. Suddenly, the industry had a reason to lobby for the laws, and it spent huge amounts of money doing so. As a result, many such laws passed, but not enough to nullify the rule. We finally had the lifesaving benefits of both belt-use laws and air bags—despite the industry's best efforts.
Ben Kelley
Ojai, Calif.

According to Gladwell, Haddon "did not believe in safety measures that depended on changing the behavior of the driver." This is false. Haddon, with whom I worked for many years, strongly believed in a balanced approach, aimed at drivers, vehicles, and the environment. As head of the federal highway-safety bureau, he set many driver-related standards, only to see them overturned by politicians. We have weaker laws than many other countries because of weak political leadership, not because of Haddon's ideology. Gladwell's ignorance is betrayed by his comment that "the most important new safety advances" involve "seat belts, not air bags." Yet the features he praises—pretensioners and force limiters—work with air bags. Today, cars are safer, and thousands of people are alive, because of Haddon.
Brian O'Neill, President
Insurance Institute for Highway Safety
Arlington, Va.

Malcolm Gladwell replies:
In 1965, Nader wrote, in "Unsafe at Any Speed," that air bags were superior to seat belts and eventually ought to replace them. Claybrook's claim that she worked hard for seat belts is contradicted by other aspects of her record, by colleagues of hers, and by her writings, in which she has said that seat-belt laws would never work. The "balanced" Haddon opposed seat belt laws in California, in the tragically mistaken belief that greater gains could be made with air bags. The automakers' preference for seat belts over air bags wasn't merely a cynical ploy; it was the correct position. Safety, as Nader and others took too long to understand, begins with seat belts.

•

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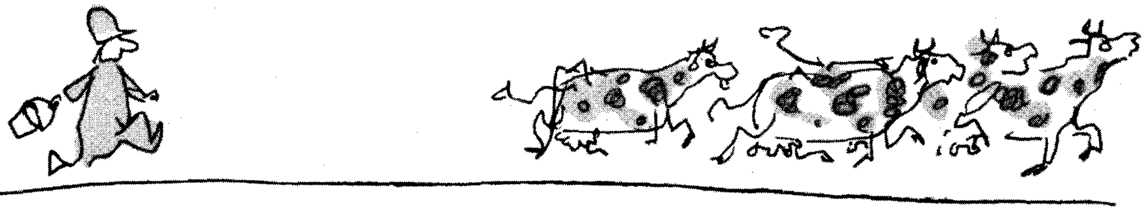

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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

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BLUE WINDOW
A revival of Craig Lucas's 1984 play, set at the Sunday-night dinner party of a group of friends living in New York. Marin Hinkle leads the cast. In previews through July 9. Opens July 10 at 8. (28th Street Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 206-1515.)

MAJOR BARBARA
Cherry Jones has the title role in a Roundabout Theatre Company production of Shaw's play, which also stars Dana Ivey, David Warner, David Lansbury, Denis O'Hare, and Zak Orth. Daniel Sullivan is the director. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

MR. PRESIDENT
Gerard Allesandrini has updated Irving Berlin's 1962 musical to reflect the current political scene. The show will run in repertory with Allesandrini's "Forbidden Broadway 2001: A Spoof Odyssey." In previews. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
The Aquila Theatre Company's version of Shakespeare's comedy, set in London in the sixties. In previews. (45 Bleecker Street Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 529-4530.)

MUSIC FROM A SPARKLING PLANET
A new comedy by Douglas Carter Beane ("As Bees in Honey Drown"). T. Scott Cunningham, Michael Gaston, Ross Gibby, Josh Hamilton, and J. Smith-Cameron are in the cast. In previews. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200.)

ONCE AROUND THE CITY
Mark Linn-Baker is the director of a new musical comedy, about Manhattan life during the booming eighties. With music by Robert Reale and book and lyrics by Willie Reale. In previews through July 9. Opens July 10 at 6:30. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

SLANGUAGE
Poetry, jazz, hip-hop, politics, the blues, and boleros are all a part of the latest work by the Bronx troupe known as Universes. Jo Bonney is the director. Previews begin July 6. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 239-6200.)

A THOUSAND CLOWNS
Tom Selleck is the eccentric Murray Burns, in a revival of Herb Gardner's 1962 comedy. Mark Blum, Robert LuPone, Barbara Garrick, and Bradford Cover are also in the cast. John Rando is the director. Previews begin July 4. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

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TOPDOG/UNDERDOG
Don Cheadle and Jeffrey Wright portray a pair of rivalrous brothers, Lincoln and Booth, in Suzan-Lori Parks's new comedy. Previews begin July 10. George C. Wolfe is the director. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

WHERE'S MY MONEY?
A new comedy by John Patrick Shanley, about two Brooklyn divorce lawyers. In previews through July 8. Opens July 9 at 8. (Center Stage/NY, 48 W. 21st St. 905-0593.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL
A kind of "My Fair Bat Boy," in which a half-bat, half-man—memorably played by Deven May—emerges from his childhood cave into adult bourgeois life. But the musical world he enters is one of darkness, not light, of ironies, not idealism, where plot is a history of abdications and song extolls the emptiness of all the standard credos—Christianity, family, community, love, redemption—and of the musical form itself. It's a jejune vision, but a smart, playful, and funny one nonetheless. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/9/01.) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

BLAST!
A musical extravaganza, which evolved from the drum-and-bugle corps Star of Indiana. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

BLUE
Phylicia Rashad is the star of a new comedy by Charles Randolph-Wright, with music by Nona Hendryx. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

CHAUCER IN ROME
The latest play by John Guare, set in Italy during the final year of the last millennium. Nicholas Martin is the director. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

A CLASS ACT
Ed Kleban's life following his success as the lyricist of "A Chorus Line" is the basis of this musical. With songs by Mr. Kleban and a book by Linda Kline and Lonny Price. Mr. Price is the director. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

DOWN SOUTH
In a comedy by Doug Field, the Rattlestick Theatre takes aim at the Cuban-missile crisis. (224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 239-6200.)

ELI'S COMIN'
The late Laura Nyro's witty, passionate songs first came to public attention in 1968. This cycle of twenty of them manages, with music only, to tell the tale of a woman's life in the city—a tale of fun, temptation, loss, and redemption—without a false note (in any sense). The terrific Judy Kuhn leads the cast. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303. Closes July 14.)

EVERYTHING THE TRAFFIC WILL ALLOW: THE SONGS AND SASS OF ETHEL MERMAN
A cabaret tribute to the late singer, starring Klea Blackhurst. (Upstairs at Jack Rose, 771 Eighth Ave., at 47th St. 206-1515.)

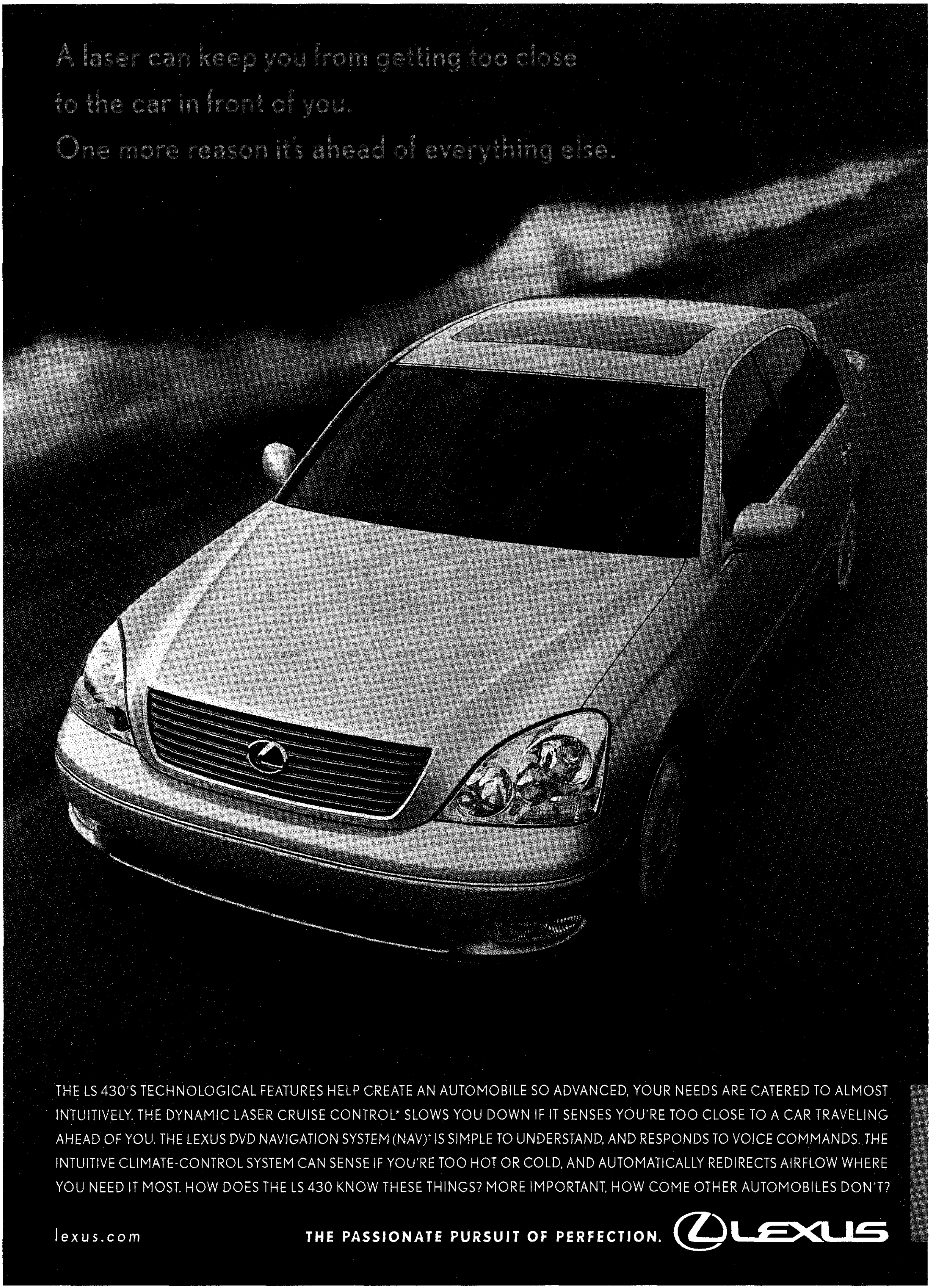
FOLLIES
This revival of Stephen Sondheim and James Goldman's landmark 1971 musical, which takes place at a reunion of Ziegfeld-like performers, is less lavish than the original production, but no matter: the show's real grandeur lies in its imaginative structure and the unfolding of its lyrically rich, resonant songs. In the hands of Matthew Warchus, who directed, the relentless, unblinking intelligence is intact. (4/23 & 30/01) (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes July 14.)

42ND STREET
As a domineering diva who breaks her ankle before the big opening night, the wonderful Christine Ebersole steals the show in this revival of the 1980 tap musical based on the 1933 film. But it has to be said: it was probably easy to do. As the young chorine who steps in to save the day, Kate Levering doesn't have enough star power to shine above the legions of hoofers who crowd the stage, and Michael Cumpsty, as the gruff director, is sorely miscast. Still, if this sort of show is your cup of tea, the songs are wonderful and the dancing is fine—just know that the cup is not quite full. (Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

FOUR
A Worth Street Theatre staging of a drama by Christopher Shinn, which follows the relationships of a quartet of linked characters on a single day. Jeff Cohen is the director. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 206-1515.)

GEORGE GERSHWIN ALONE
A one-man portrait with music, written and performed by Hershey Felder and directed by Joel Zwick. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

GLIMMER, GLIMMER AND SHINE
The newest installment of Warren Leight's jazz reverie (he wrote the Broadway hit "Side Man"), in which the cool world and the straight world collide. Jordan Shine (Scott Cohen), the trombone-



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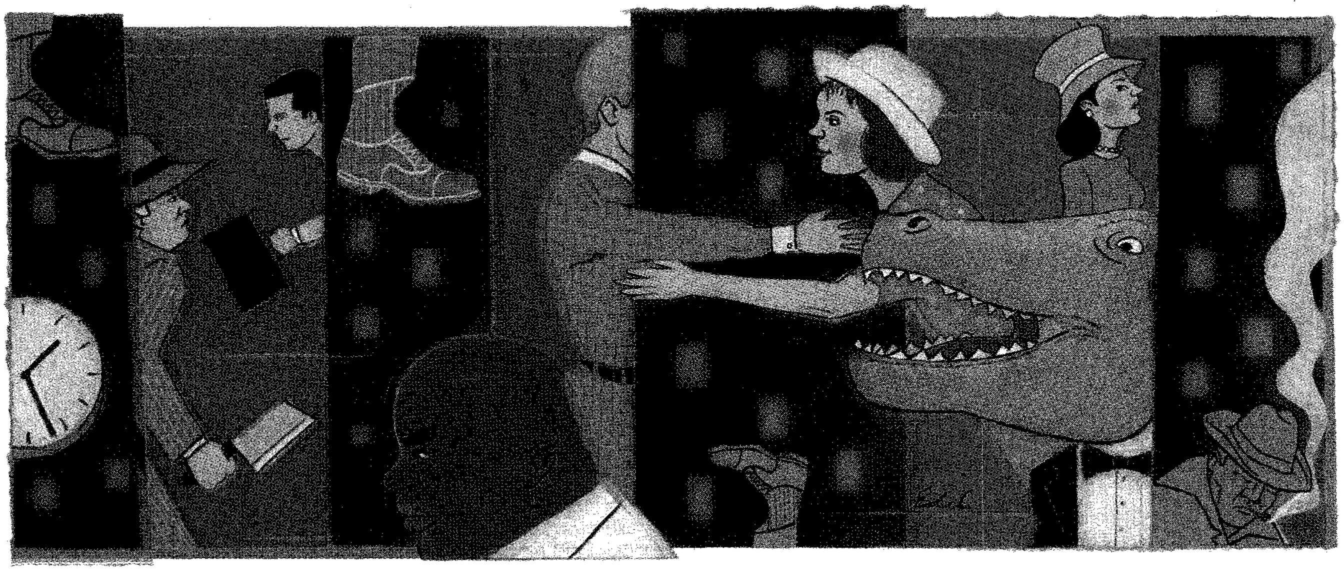
playing protégé of the trumpeter Marty Glimmer (the superb John Spencer), reveals that at a wedding gig in Greenwich, Connecticut, he met and fell for one of the guests, a pert marketing executive called Delia (Seana Kofoed), who turns out to be Marty's niece—the daughter of his estranged twin brother and former partner in a jazz combo. After the group fell apart, Marty stuck to jazz's romantic, druggy, penurious, crooked ways, while his brother renounced music and became a successful textile manufacturer. On this sketchy coincidence hangs Leight's slim, clichéd tale of possible reconciliation. Luckily, Leight loves Marty, and he contrives to let the wisecracking old wastrel rip at one point, leaving behind the constraints of the formulaic plot for a verbal solo, which Spencer, with his gruff tones, elevates to a kind of ontological cool. (6/4/01) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes July 8.)



"Once Around the City," a new musical comedy by Robert Reale and Willie Reale, at Second Stage.

IN THE PENAL COLONY

Philip Glass's new musical, based on the Kafka story. JoAnne Akalaitis is the director. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.Closes July 14.)

I SING!

A musical comedy about postgraduate life in New York City, by Eli Bolin, Sam Forman, and Benjamin Salka. (Maverick, 307 W. 26th St. 239-6200.)

KIKI & HERB: STOP, DROP & ROLL

The drag duo otherwise known as Justin Bond and Kenny Mellman, in their latest show. (Fez, 380 Lafayette St. 533-2680.)

A LIFE

Fritz Weaver portrays an Irish civil servant nearing the end of his life, in Hugh Leonard's 1981 play. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

LOBBY HERO

In another era, the contrivances of Kenneth Lonergan's new play would have been called hokum. But because Lonergan is the writer and director of the moving and successful film "You Can Count on Me" and the author of the acclaimed plays "This Is Our Youth" and "The Waverly Gallery" the public is expecting him to aim high. He does, and misses. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

LOVE, JANIS

A musical play about Janis Joplin, built around her songs, writings, and interviews. Though it contains no new insight, it's a useful corrective to the drunken, drug-addicted legend, and the production is a fine one. Randal Myler directed with a sure eye for the telling detail, and the seven-member band really cooks. (Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.)

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

The first of two outdoor productions by the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, directed by Terrence O'Brien. (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 914-265-9575.)

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

Dale Wasserman's severely dated adaptation of Ken Kesey's 1962 novel—a broad allegory, set in a mental hospital, about the perils of nonconformity—is a quaint relic, but as staged by Chicago's excellent Steppenwolf Theatre it's a well-acted one. Gary Sinise leads the cast, as the incorrigible psychiatric patient Randle P. McMurphy. Terry Kinney is the director. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY

In Edward Albee's new play, an older couple provide a harsh taste of what life has in store for a young couple with a new baby: the ravages of adulthood, the tidal wave of troubles and injuries that come with time. Brian Murray and Marian Seldes, two veterans who are rarely less than riveting, make the most of Albee's sharp, enigmatic writing; their highly stylized, virtuosic performances here are stunning. David Esbjornson directed. (2/19 & 26/01) (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THE PRODUCERS

High-camp heaven from Mel Brooks, who wrote the music and the lyrics for this monster-hit version of his 1968 movie—in which two scoundrels try to bilk their investors by staging a surefire failure, entitled "Springtime for Hitler." The performing centerpiece of the show is Nathan Lane, as the flamboyant huckster Max Bialystock; his kind of high-amperage panache is in limited supply these days, and both he and the excellent Matthew Broderick, as the hapless accountant Leo Bloom, deliver the mail. Expertly staged by Susan Stroman. (5/7/01) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

RANDOM HARVEST

In Richard Willett's new play, a writer on the verge of success is haunted by a tragedy—and by the ghost of Greer Garson. (HomeGrown Theatre, 2628 Broadway, at 100th St. 229-7500.)

ROMEO AND JULIET

Theatreworks/USA's ninety-minute version of Shakespeare's play. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. For information about tickets, which are free, call 642-6754.)

SIX GOUMBAS AND A WANNABE

A group of friends from the same Brooklyn neighborhood stage a reunion after fifteen years apart, in a comedy by Vincent Gogliormella. (Players, 115 MacDougal St. 239-6200.)

STONES IN HIS POCKETS

Marie Jones's play is set in an Irish village where a big-budget Hollywood movie is being made. Conleth Hill and Seán Campion play two extras in the movie and all thirteen other characters as well, including the movie's female star, its director, and various locals. Though the play has its clever ways when it comes to sending up both Hollywood and Irish mores, the stories told here aren't anything you haven't seen before. (4/16/01) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE SYRINGA TREE

A tour-de-force solo drama written by and starring the South African native and first-time playwright Pamela Gien, who gives an extraordinary performance playing all twenty-three parts. It's a love story, really, about the strong, lasting bond between a white girl and her black nanny in South Africa. Told from the girl's point of view, the story starts when she is six, in 1965, and continues through the following twenty years of turbulent and violent upheavals over apartheid. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.)

TICK, TICK . . . BOOM!

An autobiographical musical by the late Jonathan Larson ("Rent"). (Reviewed in this issue.) (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

THE WOMAN IN BLACK

Stephen Mallatratt's ghost-story thriller, taken from the novel by Susan Hill. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

WORLD OF MIRTH

A clown turns against his colleagues in a financially strapped carnival, in a drama by Murphy Guyer. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA

Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN

Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES

Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET

Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO

Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

CONTACT

Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

DE LA GUARDA

Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

THE DINNER PARTY

Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE FANTASTICKS

Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

TABLES FOR TWO

ITHAKA
48 Barrow St. (727-8886)—"Wow, this place is really far out!" a Gucci-clad, under-thirty-something was recently heard to say as she and her companion wandered into this old-fashioned hideaway, which is tucked next to a stoop on one of the West Village's leafier streets. They marvelled at the plainness of the dining room, with its whitewashed walls and exposed beams, and then headed past the kitchen into a pretty covered garden decorated with an Aegean mural and a motley assortment of potted plants. Older diners who can remember the time when an authentic Greek taverna looked like an authentic Greek taverna will feel as if they were back in some waterfront spot in Piraeus, expecting Melina Mercouri to come swivelling down the pier.

The restaurant takes its name from the island that Odysseus spent so many years trying to get home to, and there's probably nothing on the menu that would have surprised him when he got there. Among the classic Greek starters are a fish soup, crowded with shrimp, mussels, and snapper; tongue-curling spreads of *taramosalata*, *tsatziki*, and *melitzanosalata*; quick-charred octopus; slithery, chewy stuffed grape leaves; and fried cheese. The best meat dishes, all of which are straightforward, are the baby lamb, in a clay pot with orzo, and the rabbit stew, in a rich wine-and-tomato sauce. But the real draw is the whole fish—a choice of wonderfully fresh snapper, striped bass, porgy, or red mullet, which a happily gruff waiter brings to the table untouched, and then returns, minutes later, with the creature perfectly broiled, boned, and dressed in the mother of all sauces: a squeeze of lemon and a splash of olive oil. After that, the homemade yogurt, with honey and walnuts, has to be the safest port in town. (Open weekdays for dinner only, weekends for lunch and dinner. Entrées $17-$24)

—*Charles Michener*

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.
FOSSE
Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.
KISS ME, KATE
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.
LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
THE MUSIC MAN
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.
PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.
RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.
THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW
Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.
THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.
TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.
THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

PILOBOLUS
The storied company, whose directorate (Robby Barnett, Alison Chase, Jonathan Wolken, Michael Tracy) is nearly the same size as the troupe (which is always, in every incarnation, six), presents a month of performances, with three programs, each of which offers a new work. The three premières are "Davenen," which considers prayer in various highly active forms, set to a score by the Klezmatics; "Monkey and the White Bone Demon," based on a sixteenth-century Buddhist novel; and the obliquely erotic duet "Symbiosis." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. July 2-3 and July 5-6 at 8, July 4 at 5, and July 7 at 2 and 8.)

NEW YORK CITY TAP FESTIVAL
Tony Waag, the festival's producer, knows what to do when the talent is late. At the legendary midtown rehearsal hall Fazil's, he broke into a fey and endearing soft-shoe number as he waited for a group called O'D n' Tap to arrive from Hartford. The four teen-agers in the group are part of a phalanx of tappers, both obscure and illustrious, who are converging on the city over the next ten days for workshops, jams, and performances. When O'D n' Tap finally showed, they started right in on Waag's smart, entertaining patterns without even stopping to spit out their gum. Loud and slouchy (and chomping away), they held the rhythms tight between them as only a teen-ager or a pro hoofer could. No one else would care so much, and conceal it so well. At a gala tribute to Gregory Hines, the troupe will perform with Brenda Bufalino, Jimmy Slyde, Sarah Petronio, and, very likely, Savion Glover. (The Duke, 229 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. July 9 at 6 and 8 and July 10 at 7 and 9. Through July 15.)

"A CURIOUS INVASION"
Wave Hill's alfresco dance series opens with a site-specific work, choreographed by Sara Pearson and Patrik Widrig, which leads the audience through the twenty-eight-acre garden, where it encounters, at least during the performances, a smattering of haystacks, a gantlet of electric fans, a trio of hoses, and two thousand ice cubes. (Wave Hill, 675 W. 252nd St., the Bronx. 718-549-3200. July 8 at 5. Through July 15.)

"RIVERDANCE—ON BROADWAY"
Not the Lord of the Dance with his shirt off and the leather truss. The other one. (Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. 307-4100. July 4 at 2, July 5 and July 7 at 2 and 8, July 6 and July 10 at 8, and July 8 at 3. Through Aug. 26.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL
July 4-6 at 8, July 7 at 2 and 8, and July 8 at 2: The Israeli choreographer Inbal Pinto's "Oyster." ♦ July 5-6 at 8:15, July 7 at 2:15 and 8:15, and July 8 at 5: Taipei Crossover Dance Company. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE
The free concert series in Manhattan's back yard continues. July 4 at 3: **Doug E. Fresh, Biz Markie,** and **Whodini** offer an afternoon of old-school rap. July 7 at 3: **Manu Chao** makes his New York début. A legend in Europe and Latin America, Mano Negra ("Black Hand," named after an Andalusian anarchist group) was a wildly eclectic Parisian music collective headed up by Chao. Like Fishbone and the Clash, the group went well out of its way to fuse a dizzying array of genres (ska, salsa, rock, folk, jazz, etc.) and languages (English, Spanish, French, Arabic) into a hyperactively rhythmic mesh of multicultural influences. Despite dissolving Mano Negra in the mid-nineties, Chao has continued to embrace this culturally omni-inclusive aesthetic. The sallow-faced, darkly charismatic Eugene Hutz—equal parts Sid Vicious and Bertolt Brecht—opens with the local favorite **Gogol Bordello,** a five-man band specializing in what it calls "Ukrainian Gypsy surrealistic punk cabaret." July 8 at 3: Africa Fête brings in **Nder & the Setsima Group** from Senegal and **Les Têtes Brûlées** from Cameroon. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 360-2777.)

EMMYLOU HARRIS
The grande dame of progressive country celebrates the Fourth of July with a free outdoor concert. With **Amy Correia,** a young singer-songwriter with a soft, fragile voice reminiscent of Mary Lou Lord and Victoria Williams. (Battery Park. July 4 at 3:30. No tickets necessary.)

CONTINENTAL DRIFTERS
This New Orleans-based outfit, featuring Peter Holsapple of the dB's, Vicki Peterson of the Bangles, and Susan Cowsill of the Cowsills, turns out sunny folk-pop. (World Trade Center. July 4 at 6.)

MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING
Dancing under the stars at Lincoln Center. July 4: The drummer **Daniel Bechet** leads a celebration of the music of his father, Sidney, with **Olivier Franc** and **Bucky Pizzarelli.** ♦ July 5: A night of disco music and dancing with the **Crown Heights Affair.** ♦ July 6: The trumpeter Jesús Alemañy and his fiery band **¡Cubanismo!** ♦ July 7: Big-band swing with the **Artie Shaw Orchestra,** which is now led by the clarinettist Dick Johnson. ♦ July 10: The long-legged **Marcia Ball** kicks up a storm of Louisiana swamp rock and blues. (Fountain Plaza. 875-5766. Dancing starts at 8; lessons are offered at 6:30.)

TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
One of the more stridently conventional bands to blossom during the heyday of New Wave, Petty and his Heartbreakers have honed the rough edges off their music over the last two decades, evolving into one of the tightest outfits in rock music. Their dependable, all-American sound is as sturdy and familiar as an old pair of Levi's. With Jackson Browne. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. July 5 at 8.)

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!
The alfresco concert series in Prospect Park continues. July 6 at 7:30: The streets of Caracas, Venezuela, are full of big old American cars from the seventies, and the plush back seat of a '77 Chrysler Cordoba comes to mind with the groovy sounds of the Venezuelan dance band **Los Amigos Invisibles.** Sharing the bill is **Julieta Venegas,** a Mexican singer who grew up listening to American rock and roll by way of Southern California radio stations. Her infectious, angular compositions recall introspective singer-songwriters such as Suzanne Vega and spikier artists such as Fiona Apple and Björk. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. 718-855-7882, ext. 45.)

"GLAM SLAM METAL JAM"
Relegated to playing what is essentially a nostalgia circuit, the (thinning) hair metal bands **Poison, Warrant,** and **Quiet Riot** should not harbor any grand designs of major career resuscitation. For what it's worth, however, those who enjoy ridiculous juvenile quasi-metal rife with regressive sexual innuendos will probably be moved to tears by the proceedings. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 6 at 6.)

WARM-UP
This outdoor music series in the courtyard of P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center gets under way with a show by the **Nortec Collective,** a Tijuana-based outfit known for mixing the *norteño* music of its homeland with contemporary electronic elements. (22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City. 718-784-2084. July 7 at 4:30.)

JOURNEY
Capitalizing on a recent VH-1 "Behind the Music," the Steve Perry-less Journey fights to restore its good name with the aid of a vocal clone. With the seventies guitar legend turned family man **Peter Frampton** and the soft-rock mainstay **John Waite.** (Jones Beach Theatre. July 8 at 6:30.)

SIDNEY BECHET SOCIETY
Two jam sessions honor the great New Orleans jazzman. With Byron Stripling, Arvell Shaw, Eddie

Davis, and others. Daniel Bechet is the drummer. (Theatre at Greenwich Village Center, 219 Sullivan St. For more information, call 516-627-4468. July 9 at 6:15 and 8:30.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (997-4144)—July 4: **Whodini** and **Doug E. Fresh** (see Concerts—Central Park SummerStage). July 5: The Birmingham, England, reggae outfit **Steel Pulse** has turned out more than a dozen albums over the past two decades, but it is best experienced live, when gravelly vocalist David Hinds turns even the most strident polemic into a party.

BOTTOM LINE
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—July 7: The lapidary, postmodern folk of the singer-songwriter **David Wilcox.** July 10: The blues-guitar veteran **Coco Montoya** and the guitarist **Duke Robillard,** a former member of the Fabulous Thunderbirds.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S.
73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—July 5: A living piece of rock-and-roll history, **Johnnie Johnson** played piano in Chuck Berry's band for nearly thirty years, and along the way inspired Berry to write "Johnny B. Goode."

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—July 10: Liverpool's iconic **Echo & the Bunnymen,** now three albums into a lucrative reformation, may not exude the same enigmatic lustre they did during their salad days in the nineteen-eighties, but the vocalist Ian McCulloch's plaintive wail, boyish pout, and Iggy-esque swagger remain the quintessence of post-punk cool. With the **Rosenbergs.** ♦ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—July 4: Earnest Corsican music from **I Muvrini.** July 7: **Julieta Venegas** (see Concerts—Celebrate Brooklyn!).

MAXWELL'S
1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—July 4: **Southern Culture on the Skids,** a group of psychobilly swamp rockers from Chapel Hill. July 10: **Mark Eitzel,** the erstwhile leader of San Francisco's late and lamented American Music Club, brings his bittersweet, tenderloin songbook to town. Eitzel is touring in support of his latest release, the inspired and heartfelt album "The Invisible Man."

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—July 5: **David Garza,** an Irving, Texas, native and a mind-blowingly inventive singer-songwriter. He sings torch songs, confessionals, and straight-ahead pop that are quite unlike anything else out there. July 6: The **Continental Drifters** (see Concerts).

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—July 6: The members of the San Francisco-based **Tin Hat Trio** play the viola, accordion, toy piano, guitar, mandolin, and Dobro, among other instruments. The result is a kind of alternative chamber music, mixing classical influences, jazz progressions, and Old World rhythms. Their haunting and strangely familiar music is a soundtrack for the kind of puzzling dream which leaves you lying awake in the middle of the night.

WETLANDS
161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—July 5 and July 7: **Antibalas,** a multiracial Afro-beat ensemble from Williamsburg, Brooklyn, which takes its musical and political inspiration from Fela Kuti. Its shows are a thunderous mass of rhythms, horns, and bass. July 9-10: Probably the most human of the four whiny bands depicted on VH-1's reality show "Bands on the Run," Texas's **Flickerstick** displayed an endearingly shoddy work ethic. Between Rex's guitar theatrics, Dominic's burly drumming, and Brandon's soaring vocals, however, their compelling take on alternative rock mitigates their otherwise dysfunctional shenanigans.

The band Gogol Bordello, live at Central Park Summerstage.

DAVID SANDLIN

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ARCI'S PLACE
450 Park Ave. S., between 30th and 31st Sts. (532-4370)—Through July 7: The veteran Broadway vocalist **Darius de Haas** offers his take on the songs of Billy Strayhorn. Back in the spring de Haas's performance of his Strayhorn favorites was one of the highlights of Lincoln Center's American Songbook concert series. This nightclub engagement offers those of you who missed his uptown show the opportunity to hear a slightly truncated but no less promising program.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Sundays: **Chico O'Farrill's Afro-Cuban Jazz Big Band.** One of the most welcome comebacks of the late nineties was the unexpected reëmergence of the arranger, composer, and bandleader O'Farrill, a grand architect of Afro-Cuban jazz. His spicy charts, mating steaming Latin rhythms to stinging bop horn lines, feel as vital now as when they were goosing the likes of Charlie Parker, Flip Philips, and Dizzy Gillespie. Mondays: The **Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra.** How Akiyoshi has kept her big band going strong for thirty-plus years is nothing less than a triumph of the jazz spirit. A personal forum for its leader's skillful compositions, modernist arrangements, and fluid bop piano, the orchestra also has a guaranteed whirlwind of a soloist in Akiyoshi's husband, the tenor saxophonist and flutist Lew Tabackin.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through July 8: The **Joe Sample** trio. Splitting the difference between jazz and R. & B., the keyboardist Sample, best known for his work with the Crusaders, has kept his hand in the game since the late fifties, still garnering hits when most players his age have long since quit listening to pop radio.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pianist **Peter Mintun** is in charge at the Bemelmans Bar through October. A genuine throwback to a gentler time, this elegant performer specializes in curios from the twenties and thirties like "Kitten on the Keys," but he has also been known to play cartoon theme songs if the mood (or the crowd) warrants it.

CARNEGIE CLUB
156 W. 56th St. (957-9676)—Friday and Saturday nights belong to **Carey Hoffman,** a tireless interpreter of the songs favored by Frank Sinatra.

IRIDIUM
48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through July 8: **Louis Hayes** and the **Cannonball Adderley Legacy Band.** Now that his brother Nat Adderley is gone, there's no one better to lead a tribute band honoring the effervescent alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley than the drummer Hayes, the swinging motor behind the Adderley unit during its glory days. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—July 8 and Sundays throughout the month: The **Howard Fishman** quartet. Led by the guitarist and singer Fishman, a Connecticut native who spent his musically formative years in New Orleans, this quartet, featuring the violinist Russell Farhang, along with a trumpeter and bassist, mixes swing and old-time folk music into an

entirely new cocktail. During this residency the band has been delving into the dark and poignant songs of "We Are Destroyed," a theatrical piece about the Donner-party tragedy written by Fishman.

UP OVER JAZZ CAFÉ
351 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Ave., Brooklyn (718-398-5413)—July 5: **Sam Newsome & Global Unity** are here Thursdays throughout the month. Once a hard-bopping tenor saxophonist who was best known for his stint in Terence Blanchard's band, Newsome made an abrupt change in 1996 and began concentrating solely on the soprano saxophone, infusing it with a world-music sensibility. Mainstream jazz's loss is eclecticism's gain.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through July 8: The **Lou Donaldson** quartet. Well-turned bop spills into R. & B. terrain when Donaldson, an alto saxophonist, hits the stage, pledging allegiance to both virtuosity and entertainment. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

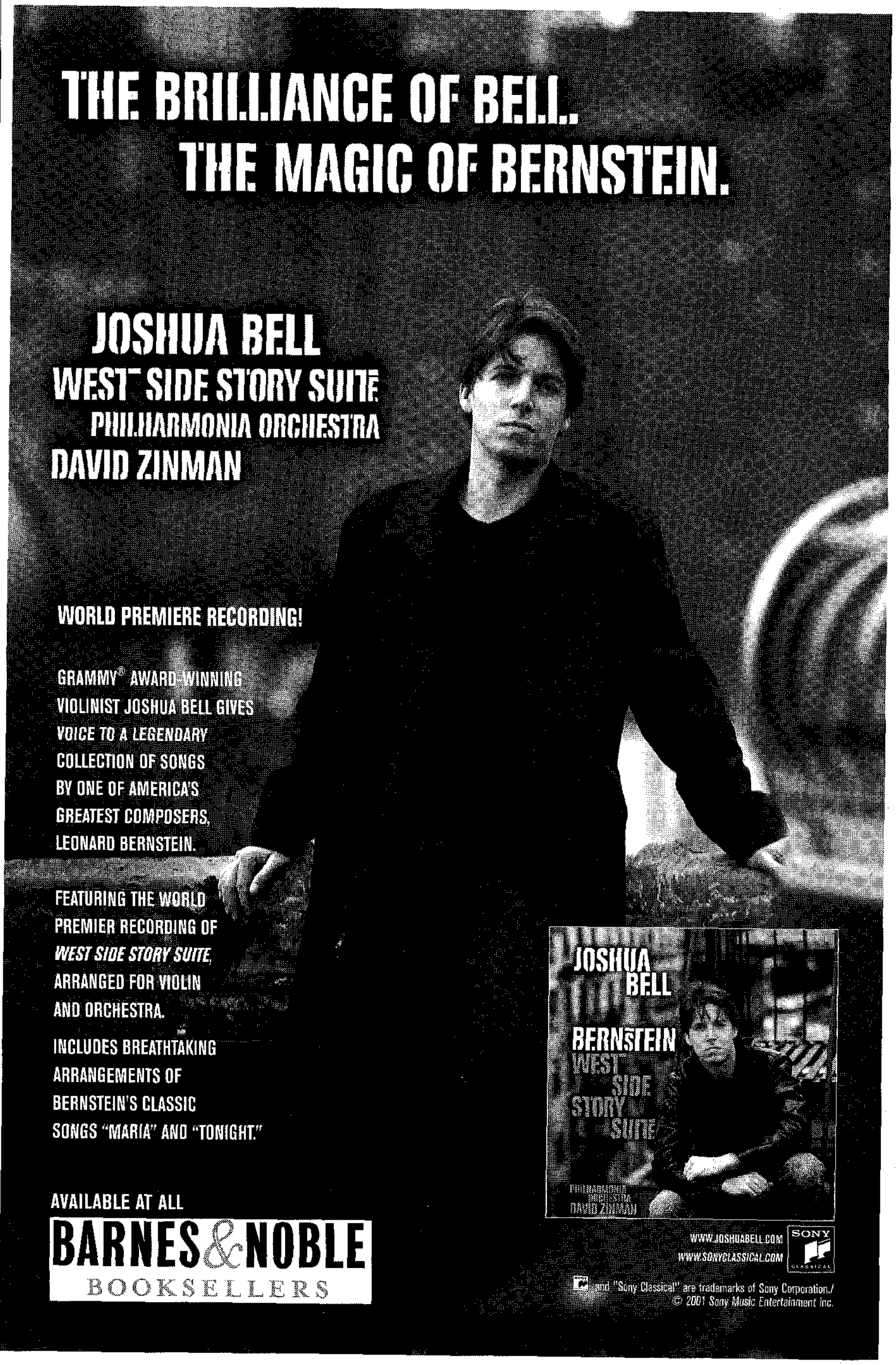
ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Summer Selections: American Landscape Drawings and Watercolors."** Nearly fifty summer landscapes and seascapes—all works on paper by American artists—are tucked away in the cozy mezzanine galleries of the American Wing. Maurice Prendergast conveys the simple pleasures of a seaside stroll in a jaunty watercolor of nineteenth-century day-trippers. On a darker note, Thomas Cole's fastidious drawing "The Wounded Indian Slaking His Death-Thirst" pits the eternity of nature against the fragility of life, as massive boulders and contorted trees dwarf the tiny stooping figure. Frequent visitors to the museum will get a kick out of Frederick Arthur Bridgman's studies of the Temple of Dendur, portrayed against a view of Egypt as opposed to the familiar one of Central Park. Through Sept. 2. ♦ In summertime, the museum's roof is transformed into Met Hampton (a bikini-free zone). This year, the sun worshippers and singles who mob the roof on weekend evenings share their turf with five large sculptures by Joel Shapiro. Three are cast in bronze, two in aluminum (one painted fire-engine red and the other cobalt blue). All five employ a similar formal strategy: square and rectangular bars are joined together at apparently haphazard angles. The arrangements have a Constructivist flavor and, in the case of the colored sculptures, invite an anthropomorphic reading, with the bars legible as arms, trunks, and legs. But the most ambitious piece, which is twenty-four feet high and looks gravitationally impossible, resembles a tumbling game of pickup sticks. Through late fall. ♦ With a consort of starstruck press and film clips and more than eighty original outfits, **"Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years"** reminds viewers of the almost brash propriety of the "Jackie look." Through July 29. ♦ **"Beyond the Easel: Decorative Painting by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis, and Roussel, 1890-1930."** Through Sept. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—An antidote to Gehry fever, the first half of the Mies van der Rohe extravaganza has opened with "Mies in Berlin." Matching its subject's famous simplicity, the show is a calmly paced bildungsroman, tracing a thirty-year progression from Schinkelesque prodigy to modernist master. Understandably, the show's curators, Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, worried that canonical projects like the Tughendot House and the Barcelona Pavilion might seem too familiar. Their decision to freshen things up with Thomas Ruff's cloying colorized photographs is the show's only lapse. Otherwise, it's easy to fall under the spell of Mies's planar vision, his integration of landscape and garden design (more suited to a Californian than a Germanic climate), and his infectious love of *betonte Leere,* or heightened emptiness. A complementary show (at the Whitney) picks up where this one leaves off, with Mies's arrival in the United States in 1938. Through Sept. 11. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—At Frank Gehry's first retrospective at the Whitney, in 1986, undulant titanium roofs and wriggling walls were nowhere in sight. The Los Angeles-based architect seemed a quirky regional figure, fond of unorthodox materials (cardboard, chain-link fencing) and given to chopping projects into multiple room-sized buildings. Nobody could have predicted that he would soon be the world's most sought-after and publicized architect. This new, profoundly exhilarating show tracks Gehry's path to Bilbao, and offers working models of current projects in Scotland, Germany, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. It's too much to absorb in a single visit, but even a quick walk-through will leave visitors delighted, buoyed, amazed—and a little nostalgic for the plumb-line architecture that Gehry's fluid, crumpling planes seem poised to supplant. Through Aug. 26. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—**"Wayne Thiebaud: A Paintings Retrospective"** gathers more than a hundred paintings, watercolors, and pastels by the eighty-year-old artist whose luscious still-lifes of pies, cakes, hot dogs, and sundaes suggested associations with the Pop-art movement when he began exhibiting in the sixties. But his real skills proved to be in his use of paint and light, not Warholian irony, and the show presents many mouthwatering examples of further inventiveness, from his figure studies to his paintings of the Sacramento Valley and the dizzying San Francisco streetscape. Through Sept. 23. ♦ **"Mies in America,"** the larger of the companion exhibitions on the onetime Bauhaus director, shows how the architect's work evolved after his arrival here in 1938, from European avant-gardism to an increasingly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space-age take on American practicality. Through Sept. 23. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—**"The Genomic Revolution"** is as stagy as the museum's permanent wildlife dioramas and as wired as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Throughout the dark, labyrinthine exhibit, sound bites from scientists and Everymen overlap with a soundtrack of doubt-fostering minor-key hums and beeps. The tone tends toward boosterish enthusiasm for progress, with an occasional raised eyebrow; pronouncements like "Our perception of medicine and ourselves is forever changed" are spoken within hearing range of explanations of why it might be unwise to clone Rex or Muffin. (For one thing, two calico cats with the same genes would be unlikely to have the same pattern of spots.) Touch-screen surveys tabulate visitors' responses to controversial questions, and the museumgoers prove much more enthusiastic about genetic technologies than respondents in a recent national sample—at last count, thirty per cent of the visitors would replicate a person. Through Jan. 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Leon Golub, the dour dean of political painters, is the subject of a new retrospective, covering almost fifty years of art work. Like many careers, Golub's is U-shaped: the earliest and the most recent paintings are alike in their resolutely grim surrealism. In between, though, there are two marvellous periods. The first comes in the mid-sixties, with paintings like "Gigantomachy II," which depicts a Donnybrook among titanic combatants. The second, marked by paintings of death squads and torturers, elevated Golub's reputation in the eighties. Still jolting pictures such as "White Squad IV (El Salvador)" show bad guys at work—and remind us whose team we're on. Through Aug. 19. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (849-8300)—**"Rooms with a View"** surveys the history of landscape wallpapers, from Belle Époque vignettes of cozy ruins to the magnificent three-hundred-and-sixty-degree panoramas of the middle of the nineteenth century. Three superb examples of the latter occupy rooms of their own. It's hard to say which is the loveliest, but the exquisite craftsmanship of Zuber and Cie's 1849 "El Dorado" or Dufour's 1825 "Vues d'Italie" (thirty-three panels printed in seven shades of ochre!) make the subsequent sampling of quasi-abstract twentieth-century designs seem almost insultingly meagre. Through Oct. 14. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (288-0700)—While other museums undergo endless expansion and renovation, the Frick, a happy island of stasis, benefits by hosting yet another loan show. This time, the visitors are drawings from the Smith College Museum of Art. The sixty-eight sheets offer an idiosyncratic tour of Western draftsmanship, from Dieric Bouts (his only known drawing is on view) through Barnet Newman. Few of the images are famous; many are amazing. For sheer charm, however, none can top Louis-Leopold Boilly's "The Happy Family," which depicts a fop, his swan-necked wife, and their three tots engaged in a communal smooch. Domestic bliss doesn't get any giddier than this. Through Aug. 12. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GROLIER CLUB
47 E. 60th St. (838-6690)—**"The Grolier Club Voyages: A Smithsonian Libraries Exhibition."** When John Smithson died, in 1829, he'd never seen America. Nevertheless, the British amateur scientist willed his estate to the United States "to found, at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an Establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge." His whim has grown into the world's largest museum complex, which is well represented by this selection from its library. The displays focus on exploration and science, from Ptolemy's "Liber Geographiae" to a pop-up Buck Rogers slaying a dragon on the moon. The show includes travel accessories, such as a tiny knife-spoon-fork-and-spice-jar set in a leather case, and souvenirs, including a few tropical birds who lie flat, specimen-style, wings folded and toes tagged. Through Aug. 4. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

JAPAN SOCIETY
333 E. 47th St. (832-1155)—**"Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan: The Architect's Other Passion."** On a visit to Tokyo in 1917, Wright observed that "prints choose whom they love and there is no salvation but surrender." This handsomely designed exhibition unites the architect with his alter ego, the print collector, who amassed more than six thousand Japanese woodcuts over the course of his life. A selection of architectural drawings and a plaster model of Tokyo's Imperial Hotel are on view alongside a stellar collection of ukiyo-e prints, notably a series of Kabuki portraits by Shunsho and another of courtesans by Utamaro. The influence on Wright's work is most strongly visible in his drawing of the Thomas Hardy house, in Racine, Wisconsin: in the foreground is a single cherry-blossom branch, a formal device straight out of Hiroshige. Through July 15. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—**"Marc Chagall: Early Works from Russian Collections,"** devoted to the years prior to the artist's permanent emigration from Russia, in 1922, is something of a bumpy ride until its dazzling finale. It opens with a selection of workmanlike canvases by Chagall's first teacher, Yehuda Pen, who legitimized the theme of Jewish life as a subject for his pupil. More than fifty paintings and drawings by Chagall, all borrowed from Russian institutions, offer moments of reverie (a pair of lovers aloft over a grisaille village) and angst (war-weary soldiers tersely rendered in pen and ink). But the group of seven murals commissioned by a theatre in Moscow (one sports the artist's emblematic and ever-popular fiddler on the roof) steals the show. Through Oct. 14. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

MORGAN LIBRARY
29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)—The detailed Fra Fillipo Lippi sketch and the loosely drawn Michelangelo figure study that open **"Master Drawings from the Cleveland Museum of Art"** are enough to make you wonder if the curators have goofed and put the best things first. In fact, these masterworks are just the start of the wonders in this densely packed show, a hundred and twenty images on paper, of spare elegance and informal intimacy. The insights aren't shocking—Daumier, Goya, and Thomas Hart Benton have a loose, cartoony style; Picasso fudges details; Hopper is a natural watercolorist—but the works remain thrilling. Through Aug. 19. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5; Fridays, 10:30 to 8; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

POP NOTES

SIMPLE MEN
Leonardo da Vinci said that simplicity is the ultimate sophistication. Hans Hofman said that the ability to simplify means eliminating the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak. Neither of them dabbled in pop music, but a trio of new records proves their point.

When Mississippi John Hurt died, in 1966, he was already a folk-blues giant, and his legend has only increased as new generations of singers have discovered his understated vocals and elegant fingerpicking. Now Vanguard Records gives Hurt the tribute-album treatment with **"Avalon Blues,"** fifteen songs reinterpreted by contemporary recording artists. Like most tributes, the record is a mixed bag. The most beautiful song ("Angels Laid Him Away") goes to the most beautiful singer (Lucinda Williams), with results that are far more satisfying than anything on Williams's new album, "Essence." The second most beautiful song ("Beulah Land") goes to the second most beautiful singer (Gillian Welch), who gives it the feel of an ancient treasure. While many of the renditions are faithful to the point of timidity, others feature more modern touches: Steve Earle, with doubled-up vocals and his son Justin on resonator guitar, turns in a sprightly, ragged version of "Candy Man," and Victoria Williams converts "Since I've Laid My Burden Down" into full-on pop gospel.

Earle turns up again as the co-producer of **"Blue Boy"** (spinART), the fifth record from Canadian singer-songwriter Ron Sexsmith. On his previous albums, Sexsmith used his pure, clear voice and willfully childlike songwriting to forge a reputation as a worthy heir to such cult figures as Tim Hardin and Nick Drake. "Blue Boy" finds Sexsmith moving beyond his sparse guitar-and-vocal arrangements, thanks largely to Earle's production, which introduces elements of Beatle-esque pop and even mournful jazz trumpet. The more muscular production hurts as often as it helps, and Sexsmith ends up chasing after some of the up-tempo numbers. But the best songs, including the stunning "Parable," are reminders of his singular talent.

The most compelling testament to the virtues of simplicity comes in the form of a counterexample: the much-heralded return of Jeff Lynne's Electric Light Orchestra, the standard-bearers for nineteen-seventies symphonic rock. E.L.O. has always been a guilty pleasure, but **"Zoom"** (Epic) produces more guilt than pleasure—Lynne's obsessively ornamented arrangements, layered harmonies, and feats of studio trickery will leave you longing for a simple song.
—Ben Greenman

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

JOSÉ BEDIA
The Cuban expatriate's new canvases seem to have been inspired by the maritime excitement of Westermann's "Death Ships" or perhaps by the publicity for "Pearl Harbor." They feature enormous battleships and aircraft carriers, most of them listing, capsized, or in flames. The most spectacular image, though, is exceptionally calm: a colossal tanker drifts toward us, its deck illuminated by a glowing beacon in the shape of a human figure. Around the perimeter, tiny sailors sit, peering into the surrounding blackness. It's an eerie image, much more than just a metaphor for Cuba's isolation. Through June 29. (George Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665.)

ALEX KATZ
Katz now occupies an almost Bogart-like position in the art world: his unflappable decisiveness seems so natural that it's easy to forget that it is a matter of skill and will. Which is why this small exhibition is such a pleasure. A collection of rarely seen preliminary sketches, drawings, and early collages, the show suggests the behind-the-scenes effort that goes into Katz's taciturn surfaces. "Ada in Aqua," for example, appears in three versions, on board, paper, and canvas; Katz is first casual, then careful, and finally brash. Through July 13. (Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 861-7338.)

ALEXANDER LIBERMAN
Back in the late nineteen-sixties, the Russian-born artist (and editorial director for Condé Nast from 1962 to 1994) discovered an unusual material: steel gas pipes. Liberman assembled the giant cylinders into playful groupings that resemble classical ruins, cannons, logjams. Subsequently, he made smaller indoor maquettes, five of which are on view here. On a tabletop scale, Liberman's debts to Anthony Caro are more obvious, but the best

pieces have an appealing, brutalist clunkiness: it's a pity Liberman won't be around to make use of the Alaska pipeline when it runs dry. Through Aug. 10. (Ameringer Howard, 41 E. 57th St. 935-1110.)

JIMMY WRIGHT
Wright's sunflowers are often nearly unrecognizable: swaying on crooked stalks, their giant seed heads sprout lanceolate twists that could be solar flares. Others look aquatic: seaweedy tangles drift across canvas or paper, mixing suggestions of Odilon Redon with Wright's own distinctively agile draftsmanship. The result is a kind of passionately unkempt flower painting: not exactly unsentimental, but full of a writhing, macabre lushness that might remind viewers of Theodore Roethke's descriptions of root cellars. Through July 12. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111.)

"PLATYPUS"
Just as reptile meets mammal and bird in the duck-billed platypus, art mingles with everything from fashion to film in this blithe group show curated by Augusto Arbizo. L.A. painter Kim Fischer puts a fresh spin on logo mania in a pair of tomato-red paintings that hybridize Ad Reinhardt and Andre Courèges (close inspection of the apparently monochrome canvases reveals the initials "AC"). Michael Minelli's text-and-photo collages play a winning game of six degrees of separation, linking such total strangers as Jerry Garcia, JonBenét Ramsey, and the artist's mother. But best of show goes to the London-based Italian artist Enrico David, whose needlework canvas conflates De Chirico and Carnaby Street. Through July 20. (Lawrence Rubin Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 445-0444.)

Short List

TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK
James Cohan, 41 W. 57th St. 755-7171.
Through July 28.
WAYNE THIEBAUD
Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 987-4997.
Through July 12.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

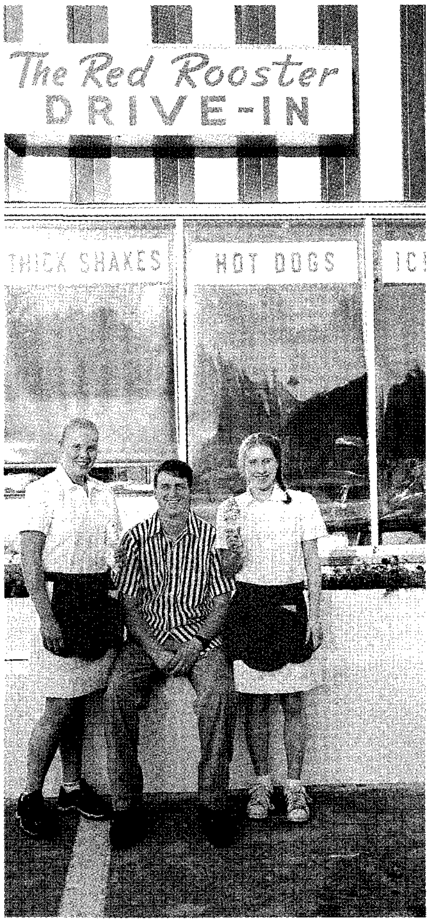
KAREN F. GIUSTI
"The White House Project" is smaller and stranger than it sounds—it's more like a trip to a conspiracy theorist's studio than a tour of the Rose Garden. Giusti opens her files to viewers; these include many acetate collages, packed full of architectural drawings and letters of rejection from the National Parks Service (which say, in hundreds of words, "No you may not come and photograph the eaves of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue") all documenting her enterprise: to build a greenhouse shaped like the Presidential residence. The small Plexiglas model in the front room, with a dollar printed on one wall and sliding doors in its roof, is witty. The larger version in the back is playhouse-sized and a fine excuse to see the gallery's own small garden. Through July 28. (Nikolai, 505 W. 22nd St. 414-8511.)

Short List

JACQUELINE BOOTIER
Lombard Fried, 531 W. 26th St. 967-8040.
Through July 27.
RALPH FASANELLA
ACA, 529 W. 20th St. 206-8080.
Through July 7.
JASON MEADOWS
Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 414-4144.
Through July 6.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

AIDAS BAREIKIS
Jason Rhoades meets J. G. Ballard in this show of sci-fi scatter art. The most ambitious piece, titled "Silence Before the Curve," transforms the front gallery into the scene of an extraterrestrial car crash. Thanks to the artist's liberal use of iridescent plastic and opaline paint, the entire room takes on a lunar glow. Schematic drawings of satellites line the wall above an entropic sprawl of objects including a motorcycle, toy guns, and a pair of wax-encrusted severed heads, as well as a re-creation of a fifties car crash rendered in aluminum roasting pans and sheet metal. Through July 28. (Koenig, 359 Broadway. 334-9255.)



SYLVIA PLACHY

PIT STOP *Savvy get-out-of-towners heading north to Tanglewood or the Appalachian Trail try to stop at the Red Rooster Drive-In, on Route 22 in Brewster, New York, just as the noontime growls are kicking in. Here, at this tiny A-frame next to a miniature-golf course, is fast-food dining pre-Golden Arches: the servers have smiles that match their candy-striped shirts, and everything—the fries, the hot dogs, the rings—is sizzled from scratch.*

MARLENE DUMAS
Paintings and drawings of solitary nude figures by an artist who insinuates more than she depicts. Most of the subjects are behind bars, and most of the canvases take the form of a narrow vertical slice. The effect is claustrophobic. Sex and threat go hand in hand, extending from the subject matter to the palette, which tends toward bruised shades of eggplant and indigo. The simplest work here is the most powerful, a calligraphic portrait of an uncaged youth, his hands covering his groin as he glares defiantly at the viewer. The image has the elegance and economy of a Chinese scroll. Through July 7. (Tilton/Kustera, 49 Greene St. 941-1775.)

REBECCA QUAYTMAN
In 1939, the artist's grandfather and great-grandfather were killed instantly while driving home from the World's Fair in Queens when a train hit their car. Quaytman takes this accident as the departure point for an investigation into the architecture of memory. The forty paintings here—handmade or silk-screened with photographic images—are installed in three rows, two of fourteen and one of twelve—the last two spots vacant, for the victims. Each painting stands on its own merits, but the cumulative effect is cinematic and elegiac. Through July 14. (Spencer Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. 334-3455.)

Short List

TEUN HOCKS
P. P. O. W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642.
Through Aug. 10.
RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN
Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through July 20.
WALLACE WHITNEY
Canada, 359 Broadway. 925-4631.
Through July 28.

PHOTOGRAPHY

LUCY FREMONT
This series of color prints of artists' and connoisseurs' pets posed against art from their owners' collections is unmistakably a coffee-table book in the making. The charm of the animals and the celebrity of their masters—exemplified by the calico cat and sea-foam green of "Kitty with a Painting by Jedd Garet" and the dachshund and sunflower yellow of "Minnie with a Painting by Ross Bleckner"—should make it an easy sell. But creative blunders, like the use of an old mattress pad for the backdrop of "Rocky with a Collage by Robert Rauschenberg," and technical weaknesses, like the lacklustre rendering of that image's pet (a turtle) and its aquatic-themed art work, can leave Fremont's subjects looking worse in these prints than they would in life. Through July 13. (Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227.)

FRANÇOIS-XAVIER SEREN
As a photographer for the French society magazine *Point de Vue et Images du Monde*, Seren glories in his proximity to his aristocratic subjects and their eccentricities. The Marquis d'Amat, holding a pet rabbit, observes the viewer through tinted glasses over a chessboard at Versailles; the Duc d'Orléans wiggles his extraordinarily bushy eyebrows; and the Comtesse de Paris sits regally in a high-necked dress. The prints—particularly the candids, which sometimes look like a corporate photographer's convention shots—don't pretend to be more than the quick work of a journalist, but the subjects, and some lively compositions, bear scrutiny. Through July 21. (M. Y. Art Prospects, 135 W. 29th St. 268-7132.)

CÉLINE VAN BALEN /
CARLA VAN DE PUTTELAAR
These two young photographers attended Amsterdam's Rietveld Academy together, and their delicate color images of women have much in common, including close cropping and a contrarian sensibility. Van Balen's portraits of Amsterdam's young Muslim girls, which might easily have been reminders of the limitations of life behind the veil, seem warm and hopeful, while van de Puttelaar's smooth young nudes and partially clothed figures are ominously shadowy and flawed in blue-white against black. Through July 6. (Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 627-2410.)

"OVERNIGHT TO MANY CITIES"
This show—subtitled, with a flourish, "Travel and Tourism at Home and Away"—is, appropriately, all over the map. Portraits hang with landscapes, eight-by-ten-inch vintage prints shrink from radiant Ektacolor, and Larry Clark rubs up against Walker Evans. With sixty-eight works competing frenetically for attention, none hold it for very long, though some quieter images do shine: Mike Disfarmer's little-seen portraits, two beautiful Joanne Mulberg light studies, and a Bill Ravanesi diptych, to name a few. Through July 13. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.)

Erika's taking a few weeks off before starting her next job.

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Her 401(k) isn't.

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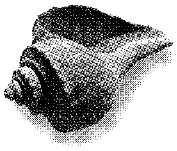

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INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (860-1777)—Sebastião Salgado's "Migrations: Humanity in Transition." Through Sept. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

MARIANA COOK
Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. 744-7400. Through Aug. 10.

KATHERINE TURCZAN
Gallery 24, at 552 W. 24th St. 414-0370. Through July 20.

"AU NATUREL: FEMALE NUDES 1920-1950"
DeLellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through Aug. 10.

"LET'S HAVE LUNCH"
Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through July 13.

"MAGNUM: A COMMUNITY OF THOUGHT"
Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through Aug. 4.

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

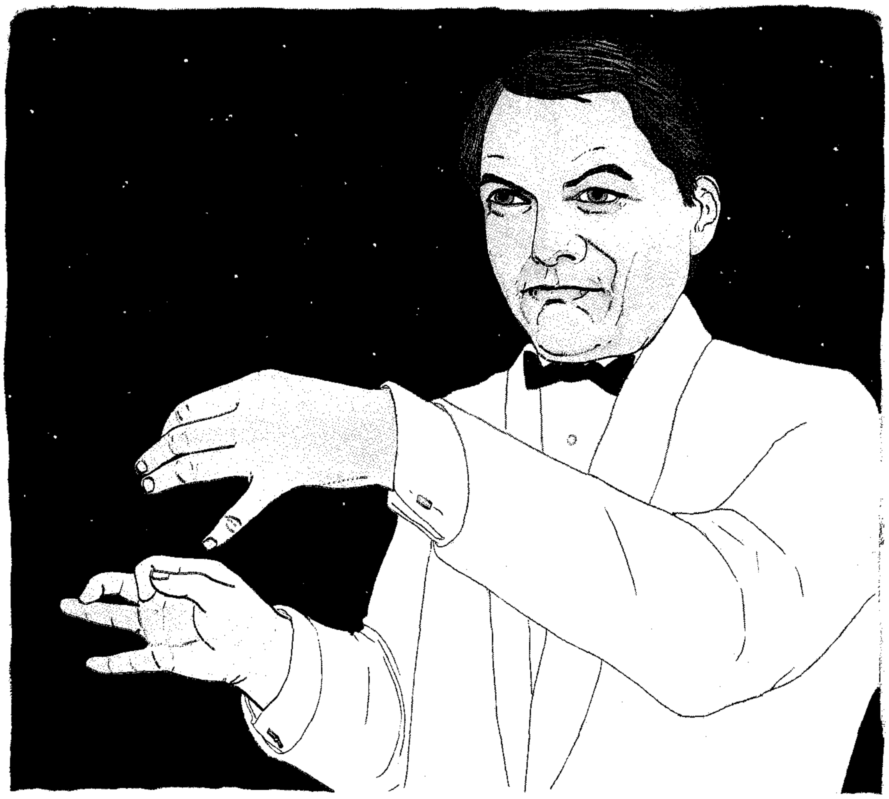
"MET IN THE PARKS"
The Met concludes its annual season of outdoor operas; all performances are free, and no tickets are necessary. For directions and other information, call 362-6000. **"La Traviata,"** with Ainhoa Arteta, Stuart Neill, and Dwayne Croft; Maurizio Barbacini conducts. (Brookdale Park, Montclair, N.J. July 6 at 8.) ♦ **"Tosca,"** with Georgina Lukács, Francisco Casanova, and Frederick Burchinal; Julius Rudel. (Cooper River Park, Pennsauken, N.J. July 7 at 8.)

OPERA FESTIVAL OF NEW JERSEY
Two productions in repertory presented by the state's largest opera company; each is impressively cast. July 7 at 8: Gluck's **"Orfeo ed Euridice,"** directed by Karen Tiller. The mezzo-soprano Margaret Lattimore, whose luscious voice and noble bearing can bear comparison with Marilyn Horne's, and the soprano Christine Brandes, a star of the New York City Opera, take the title roles; David Agler conducts. Through July 29. ♦ July 8 at 8: **"Turandot,"** Puccini's final opera, staged by John Hoomes. The Ukrainian soprano Anna Shafajinskaia, making her U.S. début in this production, takes the title role (which she is scheduled to repeat at Covent Garden), Allan Glassman is Calaf, Theresa Cincione is Liù, and Scott Altman is Timur; Michael Ching conducts. Through July 26. (McCarter Theatre, Princeton, N.J. 609-258-2787.)

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL
This year's classical events—largely a window on Europe—begin with three productions on the same night; further performances of all works continue into the next week. July 10 at 7: The U.S. première of **"White Raven,"** an opera by the composer Philip Glass and the director-designer Robert Wilson. Commissioned by the Portuguese government for Lisbon's Expo '98, its text (by Luísa Costa Gomes) is a historical fantasy about Vasco da Gama and the Age of Discovery which Glass and Wilson fill out with extravagant costumes, mythical settings, and an affectingly lyrical score. Dennis Russell Davies conducts the American Composers Orchestra. (New York State Theatre.) ♦ July 10 at 8: The New York première of **"EDDA: Viking Tales of Lust, Revenge, and Family,"** the singer Benjamin Bagby's starkly beautiful reconstruction of the world of Old Norse sagas, performed with the singers and instrumentalists of Ensemble Sequentia and with actors from Ping Chong and Company. The family in question is that of Wotan, Loge, Brunhilde, and Siegfried; it's dramatic stuff, but with minimal staging and décor the show has more of the formal air of a recital rather than the electricity of a theatrical event. (John Jay College Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St.) ♦ July 10 at 8:30: In **"Luci Mie Traditrici"** ("My Treacherous Eyes"), a chamber opera by the composer Salvatore Sciarrino enjoying its U.S. première, an aristocratic couple, wrapped in white Edwardian clothing and a bluish haze of lighting, enact a drama of sex, betrayal, and murder, loosely based on an episode in the life of the sixteenth-century Italian composer Gesualdo. Sciarrino's music is a bleak landscape of breathy flute tones, high-register string scrapes, and muffled drumbeats, with weird Renaissance-style interludes; the spare, evocative staging is by Trisha Brown. (La Guardia Drama Theatre, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St. For tickets to all productions, call 721-6500.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Brooklyn's home-town orchestra offers a free concert at one of the borough's favorite sites. Alexander Mickelthwate is the guest conductor for a program of music by Glinka, Ellington, Beethoven, and others. (Prospect Park Band Shell, Brooklyn. July 7 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)



Will Crutchfield conducts Rossini's "Otello" at the Caramoor Music Festival on July 7.

LARA TOMLIN

CHOIR OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD
Matthew Morrison conducts this Oxford University chapel choir of men and boys, which dates back to 1637, in sacred music by Gesualdo, Tippett, Rachmaninov, and others. (St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fifth Ave. at 51st St. July 9 at 1:30. No tickets necessary.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC CONCERTS-IN-THE-PARKS
William Eddins, the resident conductor of the Chicago Symphony, kicks off the Philharmonic's annual summer series with Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 and a bouquet of Bernstein, including music from "Candide" and "West Side Story" arranged for violin and orchestra by John Corigliano and William David Brohn, respectively, and premièred by Joshua Bell. A ceremony marking the U.S. Post Office's issuance of a Leonard Bernstein stamp precedes the concert; fireworks follow. (Great Lawn, Central Park. July 10 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

WASHINGTON SQUARE MUSIC FESTIVAL
The festival begins its forty-third series of free outdoor concerts with an all-Handel program: the Oboe Concerto in G Minor (with Marsha Heller) and the complete "Water Music." Kenneth Cooper conducts the festival's baroque chamber orchestra from the harpsichord. (Washington Square Park, near La Guardia Pl. at W. 4th St. July 10 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

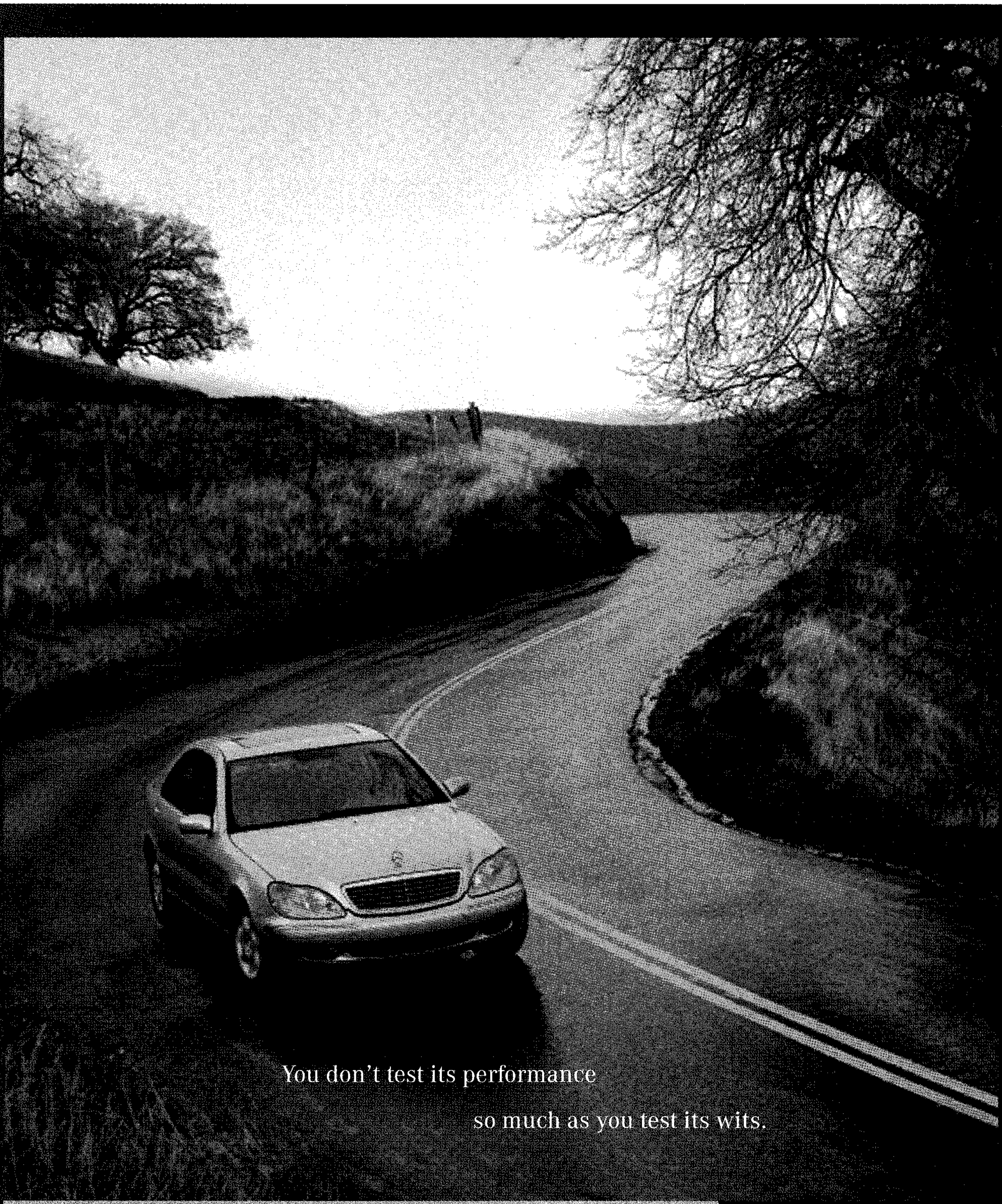
RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC
July 5-6 at 7:30: German and Hispanic music mix smoothly in a program of works by Bach, Mozart (the Trio for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano in E-Flat Major), de Falla, Piazzolla (Tango Étude No. 6 for Solo Clarinet), Schumann, and Bruch, played by the clarinettist Mark Nuccio, the violist Robert Rinehart, and the pianist Phillip Bush. ♦ July 7 at 7:30 and July 8 at 4: A more traditional program, of Brahms, Schumann, and Dvořák (the Piano Quartet), performed by Bush, Rinehart, the violinist Carmit Zori, and the cellist Julia Lichten. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

SUMMERGARDEN
The Juilliard School's summer season of modern music, directed by Joel Sachs, has moved to Bryant Park, to make room for construction at its usual home, the Museum of Modern Art. This year's theme is "Points of Origin: Composers Confront Their Traditions," with the first concert devoted to music by Guo Wenjing, Charles Ives (the Symphony No. 3), and Latin-American composers. (Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. July 6-7 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

SUNDAYS ON THE ISLAND
The charming Le Refuge bed-and-breakfast hosts a recital featuring the violinist Ning-chih Hsu and the pianist Ofra Yitzaki, performing Mozart's Sonata in B-Flat Major, K. 454, along with showpieces by Kreisler, Brahms, Paganini, and Saint-Saëns. (620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. For more information, call 914-664-6934. July 8 at 12:30.)

"CROSSCURRENTS" CONCERT SERIES
Contemporary American music of all kinds is celebrated at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum's summer festival, held on its terrace and garden. In this concert, musicians from the Eos Orchestra appear with the San Francisco com-



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poser Jake Heggie, who will introduce a selection of his works (including "Lugalla," a new piece for string quartet). (Fifth Ave. at 91st St. July 10 at 6:30. No tickets are necessary, but concertgoers are requested to bring a blanket for lawn seating.)

OUT OF TOWN

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL

July 5 at 4:30: An opportunity to check in on the progress of the pianist Helen Huang, who as a demure twelve-year-old made her début with the New York Philharmonic in 1995; her program includes music by Beethoven, Schumann (the rarely heard Third Sonata), Debussy, and Ravel. (Spanish Courtyard.) ♦ July 6 at 8:00: Windscape, a virtuoso wind quintet that includes the bassoonist Frank Morelli and the hornist David Jolley, presents music from the Roaring Twenties by Stravinsky, Weill, Gershwin, Louis Armstrong, and others. (Spanish Courtyard.) ♦ July 7 at 8: Will Crutchfield, the conductor-critic who since 1991 has made Caramoor into a home for exciting and historically informed performances of bel-canto opera, continues his mission this summer by presenting the two great operas based on Shakespeare's "Othello." First up is the 1816 **"Otello,"** by the young Rossini (directed by Claudia Zahn), which was such a successful effort that it turned the course of Romantic opera toward tragic subjects for years to come; Verdi's more famous version (which will be presented on July 21) should be heard as more of a successor than an improvement. With Carlo Scibelli in the title role, Marguerite Krull as Desdemona, and Matthew Chellis as Iago; Crutchfield conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's, in the ideal acoustics of the Venetian Theatre. ♦ July 8 at 3:30: Anton Kuerti plays Beethoven's last five piano sonatas. (Venetian Theatre.) (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA

July 5 and July 7 at 8: Chabrier's **"L'Étoile"** (1877), a light-as-gossamer opéra bouffe that became a favorite of Poulenc and the composers of Les Six, opens the Glimmerglass season, in a new production directed by Mark Lamos. The singers include Torrance Blaisdell, Karina Gauvin, and Christine Abraham; Stewart Robertson conducts. ♦ July 6 at 8 and July 8 at 2: Mozart's **"Le Nozze di Figaro,"** another new production, directed by Stephen Lawless. Dean Ely, Joyce Guyer, Nicole Heaston, Valerie Komar, and Christopher Schaldenbrand take the leading roles; George Manahan conducts. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

TANGLEWOOD

July 5 at 8:30: The pianist Peter Serkin's latest Schoenberg concert features Mary Nessinger, a radiant young mezzo-soprano who has made herself invaluable to New York's new-music scene; she is the reciter for "Pierrot Lunaire" (1912), a lurid masterpiece of Expressionist melodrama that has retained its icy edge. Bring a jacket. The Suite, Op. 29, completes the program; the assisting musicians include the violinist Ida Kavafian and the clarinettist David Shifrin. (Ozawa Hall.) ♦ July 6 at 8:30: The official opening concert of the season at the Tanglewood Shed, with Seiji Ozawa conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Beethoven's Eighth Symphony and Strauss's "Don Quixote," with the violist Steven Ansell and the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. A chamber concert in Ozawa Hall, featuring members of the B.S.O., precedes the orchestral concert, at 6. ♦ July 7 at 8:30: Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos conducts the B.S.O. in music by Strauss ("Ein Heldenleben") and Mozart (the "Serenata Notturna" and the Violin Concerto No. 5, with Itzhak Perlman). (The Shed.) ♦ July 8 at 2:30: Mariss Jansons conducts the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, making a guest appearance in the Shed, in music by Mozart, Strauss, and Tchaikovsky (the Symphony No. 5). ♦ July 8 at 8:30: A solo recital by Serkin, combining the complete piano pieces of Schoenberg—which, contrary to popular opinion, cover a breathtaking emotional range—with music by Haydn (the limpid Andante and Variations in F Minor). (Lenox, Mass. 617-266-1200.)

NEWPORT MUSIC FESTIVAL

The yachting town's grand summer "cottages" are the settings for this busy festival, which hosts several concerts a day; artists for the first week include the pianist Agustin Anievas (in a program of Handel and Brahms) and the Whitman String Quartet, one of many groups that will offer music by Dvořák, the festival's featured composer. (Newport, R.I. For information, call 401-849-0700. July 6-22.)

NORFOLK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

This still-unspoiled festival, with its acoustically superb wooden Music Shed (where musicians like Sibelius and Rachmaninoff once performed their works) and verdant picnic grounds, is the performance arm of Yale's Summer School of Music and Art, where some of the best young musicians and composers come to train. July 6 at 8: eighth blackbird, a sparkling ensemble that has rapidly emerged as one of America's best contemporary-music groups, premières six works by the composers of the school's advanced seminar. ♦ July 7 at 8: The jazz pianist Valerie Capers leads her ensemble in a program featuring music by Hoagy Carmichael. (Ellen Battell Stoeckel Estate, Routes 44 and 272, Norfolk, Conn. 860-542-3000.)

ASTON MAGNA FESTIVAL

The noted early-music festival, under the direction of Daniel Stepner, opens its twenty-ninth season with a program of seventeenth-century Italian and Elizabethan madrigals. The performers include the sopranos Sharon Baker and Roberta Anderson, the countertenor Jeffrey Gall, the tenors Frank Kelley and William Hite, and the baritone David Ripley. (Olin Hall, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7425. July 6 at 8. ♦ St. James Church, Route 7 at Taconic Ave., Great Barrington, Mass. 800-875-7156. July 7 at 6.)

MUSIC FESTIVAL OF THE HAMPTONS

July 7 at 8: Lukas Foss, the festival's artistic director, conducts the Atlantic Chamber Orchestra in an all-Mozart program (including the Clarinet Concerto, with Richard Stoltzman). ♦ July 8 at 8: More Mozart with the A.C.O., featuring the conductor and pianist Scott Dunn (performing the Concerto in D Minor, K. 466) and the violist Toby Hoffman. ♦ July 9 at 8: The pianist Daniel Gortler plays music by Brahms and David Thomas. (All performances at the Festival Tent, Snakehollow Rd., Bridgehampton, N.Y. 307-7171.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN

Brahms forms the backbone of the festival's latest concert, with the Da Ponte String Quartet offering the Quartet No. 3 in B-Flat Major and the Piano Quartet No. 3 in C Minor (with Daniel Epstein). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. July 8 at 3.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS

July 8 at 3: By Judith Handelsman, from her book "Growing Myself: A Spiritual Journey Through Gardening." A meditative walk in the New York Botanical Garden follows. (Bronx Park. For more information, call 718-817-8700.) ♦ July 9 at 7: By the rock climber Sam Lightner, Jr., from his travel narrative, "All Elevations Unknown: An Adventure in the Heart of Borneo." (Half King, 505 W. 23rd St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS

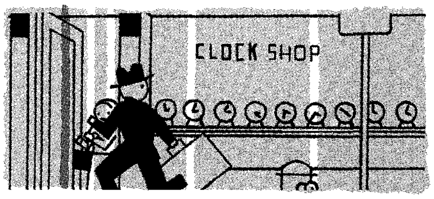
July 6 at 6:30: Jennifer Tonkovich, an assistant curator at the Morgan Library, discusses the master drawings from the Cleveland Museum of Art which are currently on display. (Madison Ave. at 36th St. 685-0008.) ♦ July 10 at 7:45: Howard Mandel, the author of "Future Jazz," talks about his work. Arnold Jay Smith is the host. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5873.)

TOURS

July 6 at 10: The public-advocacy group Time's Up! offers its monthly moonlight bicycle ride through Central Park. For more information, call 802-8222. ♦ July 7 at noon and 2: Jean Mercier, a docent at the Morris-Jumel Mansion, talks about the numerous past residents of the house while leading a stroll through the grounds. (65 Jumel Terrace, between 160th and 162nd Sts. 923-8008.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Making Time



On a July afternoon in 1876, Sandford Fleming, the chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway, missed his train. Though such an occurrence was not unusual in an era when railway companies kept their own time, the misadventure caused Fleming "monumental vexation." But, as Clark Blaise recounts in **TIME LORD** (Pantheon), it also sparked an idea. Fleming began a crusade against the timekeeping practices of his day, arguing for a new system based on a twenty-four-hour clock and time zones marked by longitude lines; pretty soon his brainstorm had evolved into the system now known as Standard Time.

Fleming's cleverness did wonders for railway passengers, but it offered little help to physicists interested in the more abstract relationship between time and space. It took Albert Einstein to propose that the faster an object travels, the more slowly it experiences the passage of time. In **TIME TRAVEL IN EINSTEIN'S UNIVERSE** (Houghton Mifflin), the astrophysicist J. Richard Gott III explains how this concept is the key to time travel; all you need to travel into the future is a swift spaceship. Alas, travel into the past, which might offer more emotional satisfaction, is far trickier, because it involves moving faster than the speed of light.

But the laws of physics are no match for science fiction. In Andre Norton's nineteen-fifties pulp classic, **TIME TRADERS** (Baen), which has recently been reissued, America's military leaders learn that the Russians are sending agents back to the Bronze Age to dig up lost technological secrets. Not to be outdone, the Americans begin training agents as well. "As long as you don't go loping off on your own to test that flint-tipped armory you've been constructing on the first available mammoth," a senior officer warns one recruit, "you can come along."

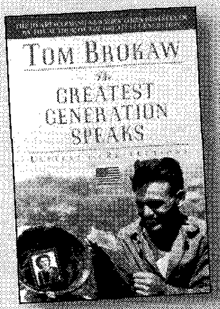
—*William Cohen*

LAURENT CILLUFFO

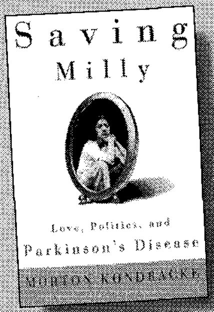
ALOUD

This follow-up to the bestseller shares the personal reflections of Americans coast to coast as revealed in their remarkable outpouring of letters to author Tom Brokaw.

THE GREATEST GENERATION SPEAKS
by Tom Brokaw
Pub. Price: $12.95
Our Price: $10.36
Readers' Advantage Price: $9.32



ADVERSITY



The political pundit chronicles his extraordinary relationship with his wife Milly and reveals how her battle with Parkinson's disease has transformed their lives.

SAVING MILLY: LOVE, POLITICS, AND PARKINSON'S DISEASE
by Morton Kondracke
Pub. Price: $25.00
Our Price: $20.00
Readers' Advantage Price: $18.00

ATTACHÉ

Drawing on letters, journals and memoirs, Katie Hickman blends public pomp and intimate circumstance to offer a glimpse of women in the diplomatic corps.

DAUGHTERS OF BRITANNIA
by Katie Hickman
Pub. Price: $25.00
Our Price: $20.00
Readers' Advantage Price: $18.00

ACTRESS

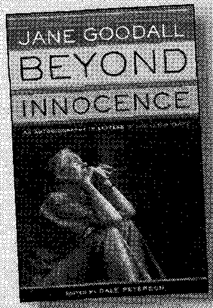
The first major biography of the film star relates her life, from child star to international movie star, concluding with some new revelations about her death.

NATASHA: THE BIOGRAPHY OF NATALIE WOOD
by Suzanne Finstad
Pub. Price: $25.00
Our Price: $20.00
Readers' Advantage Price: $18.00

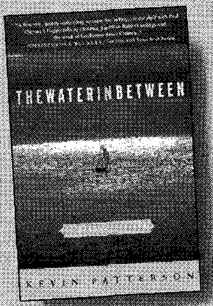
AFRICA

The second volume of Jane Goodall's autobiography explores her important discoveries in the animal world as well as her experiences with marriage and motherhood.

BEYOND INNOCENCE
by Jane Goodall
Pub. Price: $28.00
Our Price: $22.40
Readers' Advantage Price: $20.16



ATOLL



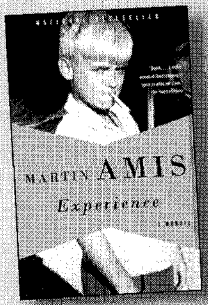
Disillusioned and heartbroken, Kevin Patterson alters the course of his life by setting sail for Tahiti and tests himself against the elements of a major storm.

THE WATER IN BETWEEN: A JOURNEY AT SEA
by Kevin Patterson
Pub. Price: $13.00
Our Price: $10.40
Readers' Advantage Price: $9.36

AMIS

Revealing a private life as fascinating as his novels, Martin Amis explores life with his father Kingsley, and delivers portraits of Saul Bellow and Salman Rushdie, among others.

EXPERIENCE
by Martin Amis
Pub. Price: $14.00
Our Price: $11.20
Readers' Advantage Price: $10.08



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MOVIES OPENING

BAISE-MOI
A prostitute and a street waif embark on a sex-and-killing spree in this drama written and directed by Virginie Despentes. In French. Opening July 6. (Cinema Village.)

BIG EDEN
The return of a gay New York artist to his Montana home town touches off an unexpected love triangle. Opening July 6. (Quad Cinema.)

CATS AND DOGS
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening July 4.

EVERYBODY'S FAMOUS!
A comedy in which a factory worker takes a pop singer hostage so that the music industry will pay attention to the songs of his awkward, overweight daughter. In Dutch. Opening July 3.

JUMP TOMORROW
Four days before his arranged marriage, a young Nigerian man falls for a Spanish woman, in this romantic comedy directed by Joel Hopkins. Opening July 6. (Angelika Film Center.)

KISS OF THE DRAGON
An action thriller set in Paris, with Jet Li and Bridget Fonda. Written by Luc Besson and directed by Chris Nahon. Opening July 6.

LOST AND DELIRIOUS
A lesbian affair blossoms at a New England prep school. With Jessica Parè, Piper Perabo, and Mischa Barton. Directed by Lea Pool. Opening July 6.

OFF THE HOOK
Two men from the South Bronx struggle to cut their first rap album. Adam Watstein wrote and directed. Opening July 6. (Pioneer.)

SCARY MOVIE 2
A sequel to last summer's spoof of horror movies. Chris Elliott, Tori Spelling, and a host of others join the Wayans brothers in the cast. Keenen Ivory Wayans directed. Opening July 4.

THE VERTICAL RAY OF THE SUN
Tran Anh Hung ("The Scent of Green Papaya") directed this drama about secrets buried within a tight-knit family. In Vietnamese. Opening July 6.

FILM NOTES

A.I.
An extraordinarily accomplished movie, but a failure. After dithering with this project for years, Stanley Kubrick bequeathed it to Steven Spielberg, who wrote his own screenplay after Kubrick's death. In the bleak world that remains after the polar ice cap has melted, David (Haley Joel Osment), a perfect-child robot programmed to love, so disturbs his neurotic mother (Frances O'Connor) that she turns him loose in the woods. There he hooks up with a friendly stud-gigolo robot (Jude Law, who is certainly more beautiful than anything human). At that point, the movie should have taken off as the story of a science-fiction Pinocchio—a toy who wants to be human—but "A.I." is surprisingly bitter. The robots are preyed upon by humans, who destroy them at disgusting W.W.F.-type revels called Flesh Fairs. One senses a Kubrickian joke: the humans are empty and cruel, the robots sensitive and noble. Yet it's a nonfunctioning irony, and perhaps the last example of Kubrick's famous misanthropy. Despite many touching and uncanny moments, and some extraordinary visual invention (the robots searching for new limbs and faces might have been created by Salvador Dali), "A.I.," which appears to celebrate the end of human existence, leaves one in a depressed stupor. With Sam Robards and William Hurt. Cinematography by Janusz Kaminski.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 7/2/01.) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Coronet Cinema, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

THE ANNIVERSARY PARTY
Alan Cumming as a charming but volatile bisexual writer who is about to direct a big-budget movie; Jennifer Jason Leigh as a neurotic actress who screws up her roles by turning everything into tragedy. In Los Angeles, they throw an anniversary party, invite their friends, get tanked, and then take Ecstasy, at which point everything begins to fall apart. Cumming and Jason Leigh wrote and directed this house-party picture together, and shot it quickly in digital video with various friends and colleagues (Kevin Kline, Phoebe Cates, Gwyneth Paltrow, Parker Posey). The movie has the kind of intensity that actors love—scenes of confrontation, breakdown, and self-revelation—but it's neither well constructed nor particularly original.—*D.D.* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

ATLANTIS: THE LOST EMPIRE
This animated feature adds little to Disney's tradition of technical virtuosity, but it does subtract one thing: the songs. Presumably this was done to make the movie more palatable to adults driven mad by ten thousand replays of "Be Our Guest." The story also has some grownup elements, like characters who die, though they mostly do so off-screen or in blinding flashes of white light. An inventor named Milo (voiced by Michael J. Fox) gets plucked from the boiler room to lead a mission to discover Atlantis. The story won't surprise you, but in a bleak summer season it at least has the merit of being coherent. Some of the sequences have an epic grandeur, especially the battle with the supersized lobster that guards the underwater city's entrance.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE CRIMSON RIVERS
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center and Empire 25.)

DR. DOLITTLE 2
Eddie Murphy talks to animals again in this mercifully short, briskly directed sequel to his 1998 hit. As wildlife's favorite veterinarian, Dolittle facilitates a romance between a circus bear (voiced by the incomparable Steve Zahn) and an endangered female bear (voiced sweetly by Lisa Kudrow) while trying to save a forest from destruction. It's good-natured film that offers the welcome tonic of a blend of talented voices rising above the bombast.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Olympia I and II, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, Union Square, and Waverly.)

DOUBLE INDEMNITY
Every turn and twist is exactly calculated and achieves its effect with the simplest of means; this shrewd, smoothly tawdry 1944 thriller is one of the high points of the decade. The director, Billy Wilder, collaborated with Raymond Chandler on the screenplay, and Barbara Stanwyck's Phyllis Dietrichson is perhaps the best acted and the most fixating of all the cold-blooded femmes fatales of the film-noir genre. With her bold stare, over-lipsticked mouth, and strategically displayed legs, she's a living entrapment device.—*Pauline Kael* (Bryant Park; July 9.)

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS
Fourteen-year-olds will hold their heads in misery, but adults may be mesmerized by an awfulness reminiscent of youth movies from forty years ago. The scene: the street-racing subculture of Los Angeles. The characters: a charismatic leader and possible hijacker (the superbly named Vin Diesel), ready-to-rumble female grease monkeys with bare midriffs (including Michelle Rodriguez), and a handsome undercover cop (Paul Walker) who infiltrates the car-racing gang and develops ambiguous loyalties. Rob Cohen, the director, tries hard for B-movie schlock magic, and attains it during the high-speed car chases, which are genuinely exciting. See this when you are too tired to think.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Union Square.)

LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER
Guns strapped to her thighs, her lower lip as radically cleft as Kirk Douglas's chin, Angelina Jolie leaps and bungee-jumps her way through action sequences as Lara Croft, upper-class English adventuress. Jolie is cocksure and insinuating; she gets by just fine on pure attitude—acting isn't required. Unfortunately, the wit of the movie resides entirely in her face and body. Jolie is matched up with nonentities and left stranded on ugly sets (basically a single enormous soundstage dressed three different ways and repeatedly smashed apart). The movie is derived from a popular video game, and it's about bad guys assembling the pieces of an ancient stone triangle in order to control the world's supply of American cheese. No, that can't be right: in order to control all the power in the world. Yes, that's it. Simon West is the unimaginative, humorless director; the movie was "written" by Patrick Massett and John Zinman.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

MOULIN ROUGE
A frantically ambitious postmodernist musical in which no single song is performed from beginning to end and no dance number is staged without the dancers' movements being kaleidoscoped into a dozen angles. Set in a stylized and digitalized Paris, the movie offers the Moulin Rouge night club as a seething Belle Époque Studio 54, where a fresh-from-the-provinces poet named Christian (Ewan McGregor) falls in love with Satine (Nicole Kidman), a consumptive cancan dancer and courtesan. The story is no more than a flimsy outline, but it still manages to combine the Orpheus myth and "Camille" and to vaguely evoke about a dozen other films. Baz Luhrmann, the director, has a talent for décor, sudden shifts in perspective, and gentle, twinkling nighttime effects, but he whips much of the movie into an opéra-bouffe clownishness.—*D.D.* (5/28/01) (Battery Park 16, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE NIGHT OF THE SHOOTING STARS
In its feeling and completeness, this 1982 film by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani may rank close to Jean Renoir's bafflingly beautiful "Grand Illusion." The story is a woman's memories of her adventures as a six-year-old in a Tuscan village and its environs during the summer of 1944, when the American troops were rumored to be only days away, and the Germans who had held the area under occupation were preparing to clear out—preparations that included mining the houses so they could blow them up. Yet this setting is magical, like a Shakespearean forest, and the woman's account has the quality of folklore and legend, and even the film's most tragic moments can be dizzyingly comic. The full fresco treatment that the directors give to the events of that summer is based on their own wartime experiences as adolescents, and on the accounts of others; it's this teeming, fecund mixture, fermenting in their heads for almost forty years, that produces the film's giddy, hallucinated realism. In Italian.—*P.K.* (Guggenheim Museum; July 7.)

PEARL HARBOR
At three hours, the new Michael Bay film lasts longer than the historical event it purports to describe; this will strike most viewers as an ominous

precedent, especially if Bay starts to get interested in Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Ben Affleck and Josh Hartnett star as a couple of boyhood friends—one bumptious, the other shy—who join the Air Force together, play aerial chicken together, and even fall in love with the same girl (Kate Beckinsale). They also manage to get a couple of planes airborne and knock out some Japanese Zeros, a feat that is no less noble for being untroubled by historical fact. The movie feels big and baggy rather than epic, and, by the end, the stitching has come apart; you never quite believe in the spate of digital effects, let alone in the weaving of war and romance. With Alec Baldwin, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Jon Voight, who rises manfully to his feet in the role of F.D.R.—*Anthony Lane* (6/4/01) (Battery Park 16, Cinema II, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

THE PRINCESS AND THE WARRIOR
Two damaged people—a sweet-tempered nurse (Franka Potente) who lives and works in a psychiatric ward and a surly tough guy (Benno Fürmann) mysteriously waylaid by sadness—are drawn together, seemingly by fate. But isn't fate just another name for an overlapping pattern of need and desire? Writer-director Tom Tykwer, who earlier made "Run Lola Run," works less kinetically this time. He varies the tempo: there are meditative passages punctuated by abrupt outbreaks of emotion—a mesmerizing new style that draws us into mysteries in an intuitive rather than explicit way. A strange, accomplished, and, finally, touching romantic drama. In German.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Opening July 6, "The Vertical Ray of the Sun," a story about three sisters, set to the music of Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground.

HIROSHI TANABE

SEXY BEAST
A tale of expatriate Cockneys, dry-roasted by the Spanish sun and determined to get England off their backs. Gal (Ray Winstone), once a crook, and his wife, Deedee (Amanda Redman), once a porno star, have retired to the Costa del Sol; now they are tracked down by an old acquaintance, Don (Ben Kingsley), who invites Gal back home for one last crime. Jonathan Glazer, the young British director making his début feature, turns the first half of the picture into a cool study of hotheads, saturated with creative cursing; the second half, which finds Gal returning to London, stumbles and slides into the grim traditions of gangsterland. But the movie needs to be seen for its clean compositions, its sure touch of fantasy, and, above all, for the forbidding presence of Kingsley—the prince of darkness, lightly disguised as a human being.—*A.L.* (6/18 & 25/01) (Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

SHREK
The Shrek of the title is a bile-green ogre with disgusting personal habits and, this being an animated feature, an essential sweetness of nature. On the orders of a wicked lord, he rescues a princess from a dragon, only to screw up the plans by falling in love with her. The new DreamWorks production is overtly snook-cocking, turning every available fairy tale on its head: the princess has a short temper and karate skills, the dragon has the hots for a donkey, and the lord's castle is as tacky as a theme park. On the other hand, the film itself is hardly rough and real; however cunning the rendering of surfaces, there's still something flat and charmless in the digital look, and most of the pleasure rises not from the main romance but from the quick, incidental gags. With voices by Mike Myers, Cameron Diaz, Eddie Murphy, and John Lithgow.—*A.L.* (5/21/01) (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

STARTUP.COM
A fascinating cinéma-vérité documentary account of how two very young men—Kaleil Isaza Tuzman, a Goldman, Sachs employee, and Tom Herman, a techie—started an Internet company in New York, burned through sixty million dollars, lost their way, and got swallowed up by another company, all within eighteen months. The filmmakers Jehane Noujaim and Chris Hegedus nosed their way into meetings and arguments and drove around with the two men as they aired their desires and fears. Tuzman is burly and handsome, with an easy, ready way about him; Herman, who keeps growing and shaving a dark beard, is high-minded and tends to be diffident about the fate of the enterprise itself. The movie's account of their dealings with each other is painfully funny and very intimate, perhaps too much so: it would have been useful to have more detail about how the business actually worked and why it went wrong.—*D.D.* (5/14/01) (Film Forum.)

WITH A FRIEND LIKE HARRY. . .
A smart new horror story, at once thrilling and upsetting, from the director Dominik Moll. Michel (Laurent Lucas), a typically fretful father on vacation with his wife and children, meets an old schoolmate named Harry (Sergi López), who promptly starts changing Michel's life for the better. This entails buying him a new car and then getting to work on his ornery parents, his tired wife, and his frustrated ambitions as a writer. You can't really fault Harry's logic, and that's what makes him so daunting; his analysis of Michel's messy existence would do for just about anyone. It's his homicidal methods that somehow feel de trop, although Michel can no more be rid of him than Othello could slip from the clutches of Iago. All this is told with a tight, nervy concentration. Anyone thinking of getting married and starting a family should probably stay clear of Moll's movie. As for driving around Europe, forget it. In French.—*A.L.* (5/7/01) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

BABY BOY
Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.

BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY (4/16/01)
84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, 64th and 2nd, and State.

CRAZY/BEAUTIFUL
East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village Theatre VII.

DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN
The Screening Room.

THE GOLDEN BOWL (5/7/01)
64th and 2nd, State, and Village East Cinemas.

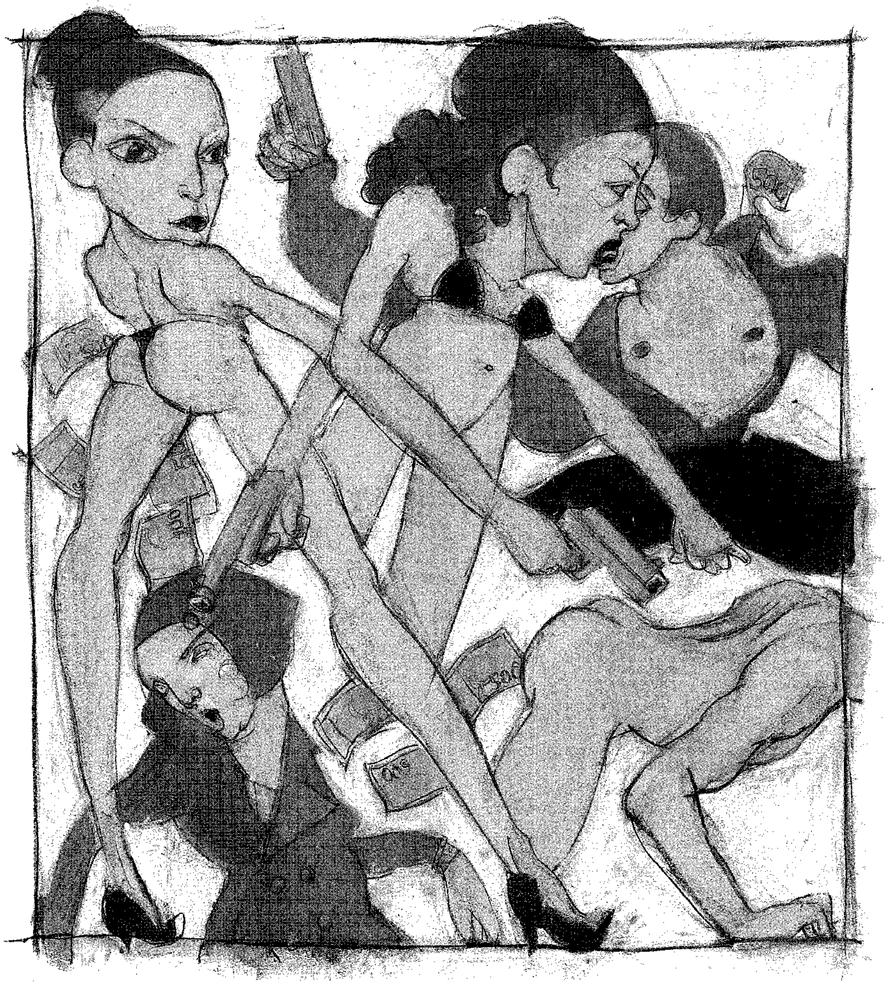
LUMUMBA
BAM Rose Cinemas and Film Forum.

MEMENTO (3/19/01)
Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and State.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St. (945-3418).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.



Opening July 6, Virginie Despentes's "Baise-Moi."

N. ASCENCIOS

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through July 15: "Vulgar Genius: The Movies of Mel Brooks." July 7 at 1: "The Twelve Chairs" (1970). ♦ July 7 at 3 and July 8 at 4: "The Producers" (1968). ♦ July 7 at 4:45: "Silent Movie" (1976). ♦ July 8 at 2: "Blazing Saddles" (1973). ♦ Repertory night. July 7-8 at 6:30: "French Can-Can" (1955, Jean Renoir; in French).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—July 5 at 7, July 6 at 9, July 7 at 2 and 7, and July 8 at 4 and 9: "Dancer in the Dark" (2000, Lars Von Trier). ♦ July 6 at 7, July 7 at 5 and 10, and July 8 at 2 and 7: "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (1964, Jacques Demy; in French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (777-3456)—July 4 at 2 and 6: "Seven Samurai" (1954, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese). ♦ July 5 at 6:50 and 9:10: "Under the Fluttering Military Flag" (1972, Kinji Fukasaku; in Japanese). ♦ July 6 at 7:30: "Battle Royale" (2000, Fukasaku; in Japanese). ♦ July 7 at 2, 5, and 8:45; July 8 at 2, 5, and 8; and July 9 at 5 and 8: "Platform" (1999, Jia Zhang-ke; in Mandarin). ♦ July 10 at 6:50 and 9:10: "Japan's Violent Gangs—Boss" (1969, Fukasaku; in Japanese).

BRYANT PARK
Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing. The feature on July 9 is "Double Indemnity" (†).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through July 12: A Jan Svankmajer retrospective. July 6-8 at 1, 4, 7, and 10: "Alice" (1987). ♦ July 6-8 at 2:40, 5:40, and 8:40: "Nature and Nightmares," five shorts (1967-83). ♦ July 9-10 at 1:15, 4:10, 7:05, and 10: "Faust" (1994). ♦ July 9-10 at 3, 5:55, and 8:50: "Art, Music and the Theater of Violence," five shorts (1964-88).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Through Aug. 14: "Women Behind the Camera." All films are in French. July 10 at 12:30 and 6:30: "One Sings, the Other Doesn't" (1977, Agnès Varda). ♦ July 10 at 3:30 and 9: "The Gleaners and I" (2000, Varda).

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (360-4321)—Through July 28: Italian cinematography. July 6 at 7 and July 7 at 3: "Dark Eyes" (1987, Nikita Mikhalkov; in Italian and Russian). ♦ July 7 at 7: "The Night of the Shooting Stars" (†).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through July 22: "Shaking Up the Box," a tribute to the Independent Television Service, which has brought works to the small screen such as the 1998 Frontline presentation "The Farmer's Wife" and David Riker's portrait of New York's Latino community "The City (La Ciudad)."

THE MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO
25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Sept. 16: "Hello, Goodbye," screenings of pilots, premières, and final episodes of classic television shows. Thursdays through Sundays at 3.

THE SCREENING ROOM
54 Varick St. (334-2100)—Through July 12: A celebration of the yakuza films of the director Kinji Fukasaku. All films are in Japanese. July 6 at 6:10: "High Noon for Gangsters" (1961). ♦ July 6 at 7:45, July 7 at 2, July 8 at 2 and 5:45, and July 9 at 5:45 and 7:45: "Under the Fluttering Military Flag" (1972). ♦ July 6 at 9:40 and July 7 at 7:45: "Battles Without Honor and Humanity" (1973). ♦ July 6 at 11:45: "Message from Space" (1978). ♦ July 7 at 4: "Modern Yakuza: Outlaw Killer" (1972). ♦ July 7 at 5:45: "Graveyard of Honor" (1975). ♦ July 7 at 9:40: "State Police vs. Organized Crime" (1975). ♦ July 7 at 11:45: "Yakuza Burial—Jasmine Flower" (1976). ♦ July 8 at 3:50: "Japan's Violent Gangs—Boss" (1969). ♦ July 8 at 7:45: "Gambler—Foreign Opposition" (1971). ♦ July 8 at 9:40: "Black Lizard" (1967).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through July 12: "Urban Ghosts and Legends: The Cinema of Tsai Ming-Liang." All films are in Taiwanese. July 4 at 2 and 6:15 and July 9 at 1:30 and 6:15: "A Conversation with God" (2001) and "All Corners of the World" (1989). ♦ July 4 at 4:15 and 8:30 and July 6 at 1, 5:15, and 9:30: "The Hole" (1998). ♦ July 5 at 1:30 and 6:15: "Vive l'Amour" (1994). ♦ July 5 at 4 and 8:45: "Rebels of the Neon God" (1992). ♦ July 6 at 3 and 7:15 and July 9 at 3:45 and 8:30: "My New Friends" (1995) and "Youngsters" (1991). ♦ July 7-8 at 12, 3:30, and 7:30: "The Peony Pavillion" (1999, Derek Bailey and Sian Busby), a film of Lincoln Center's 1999 production, will screen over the course of two days.

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YOU AND THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC

It wasn't until after she moved to France that Americans really began to appreciate homegrown treasure Dee Dee Bridgewater, who headlines at the Bermuda Jazz Festival this September.

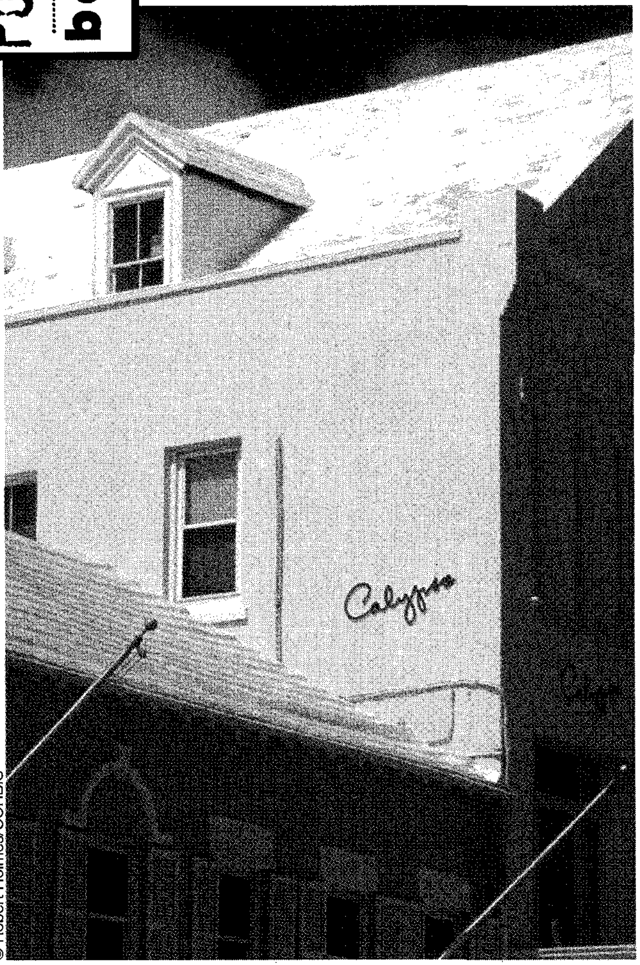
up from the atlantic, rhythm and song

BY LARRY BLUMENFELD

When singer Dee Dee Bridgewater takes the stage at the Bermuda Jazz Festival (September 14–15), the site—located in what was once the Royal Naval Dockyard built to deter invaders—will reverberate with international panache. Now in its sixth year, the festival gathers an eclectic lineup of musicians, performing in a dramatic 5,000-seat amphitheatre constructed on a Dockyard boat slip. Like everything else in Bermuda, there's a visceral beauty to the jazz festival experience. Musicians move about a fifty-foot stage that seems to float gently on the tides (it is, in fact, constructed entirely atop the water) as the sun dips below the Atlantic and the moon hangs gently overhead.

Each year, the festival celebrates jazz and blues in all their manifold varieties. Like the 180 islands that make up Bermuda, these musical forms reflect a mixture of European, American, and African influences. The Dockyard is, like jazz itself, a by-product of the slave trade throughout the African Diaspora, as well as a reaction to the past and present realities of the Americas.

The roster of talent at the Bermuda Jazz Festival has grown to incorporate the music's breadth. From the start, singers have been an important part of the festival's formula. Past performers include Cassandra Wilson, George Benson, Nancy Wilson, and Diana Krall—vocalists who have forged personal styles that draw from a rich, artistic lineage of jazz and blues, but who also project a popular sensibility.

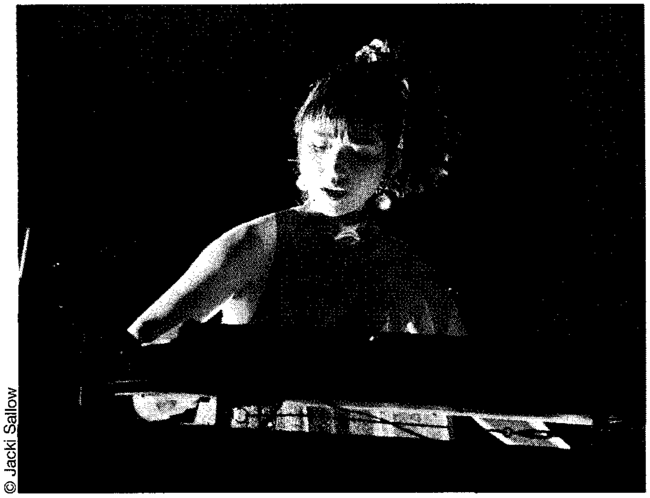


© Robert Holmes/CORBIS

For tickets to the Bermuda Jazz Festival ($70 reserved seating; $50 general admission), visit www.ticketweb.com or call 800-965-4827.

KEEN ON KEIKO

Keyboardist Matsui *(below)* is currently the best-selling female contemporary jazz artist in the United States.



© Jacki Sallow

Headliner Dee Dee Bridgewater is not only one of the most stirring and original of contemporary female jazz singers, she's also a performer of broad talents. She gained notoriety in the early seventies, singing with the celebrated Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, and later won a Tony Award for her role in "The Wiz." Bridgewater's "Dear Ella," her 1997 tribute to Ella Fitzgerald (whose style informs Bridgewater's own), earned her two Grammys.

Kevin Mahogany, another stellar performer at this year's festival, has distinguished himself among the male jazz vocalists of his generation. His style is rooted equally in the seminal work of singers such as Johnny Hartman and Eddie Jefferson and the more contemporary sounds of Memphis, Motown, and his native Kansas City. Film buffs may recognize Mahogany from his role inspired by Big Joe Turner in Robert Altman's "Kansas City."

This year's festival boasts some of the most commercially successful performers in the ranks of jazz and blues. Trumpeter Rick Braun has found himself sitting atop contemporary jazz charts for the past few years, both for his solo albums and for his frequent collaborations as composer, arranger, and producer. Jeffrey Osborne, a defining voice of contemporary soul and rhythm and blues, has been one of American popular music's most identifiable presences during the past three decades. Pianist Keiko Matsui was trained as a classical pianist in her native Japan, but she has gone on to create her own niche in a male-dominated contemporary-jazz world. Other talented and dynamic female jazz artists—including pianist Rachel Z, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, and drummer Terri Lyne Carrington—will be featured at a pre-festival concert on September 12th. And that's only one of many festivities, from jazz barbeques to club gatherings, scheduled during the week leading up to the main concerts.

The union of African rhythms, American innovation, and European tradition could be felt last year in the music of Bermudian bands, especially in the husky contralto of singer Sondra Choudhury, and the rhythmic fire of an ensemble of local teenagers named Mahogany. This September, the same blend will be evident in the music of Great Britain's Down to the Bone. The group hails from Chobham, Surrey, but their groove-oriented sounds have made them a mainstay of American pop-jazz radio.

For those seeking to extend their holiday, Bermuda's many enticements offer a seductive balance of opposites. There's the luxurious pink sand beaches of Bermuda, a glorious accident of broken shells, coral, and calcium carbonate deposits that not only look inviting but remain cool even in summer's heat. There's scuba diving and snorkeling in the coral reefs, and afterwards, the ubiquitous fish chowder that most local restaurants let you fine-tune yourself with cruets of sweet dark rum and a fiery concoction called "sherry peppers." There are British formalities such as jackets and ties, mitigated by below-the-waist attire known the world over as "Bermuda shorts." There's the bracing ginger beer of the nearby Caribbean that contrasts with the veddy traditional afternoon tea. Jazz may be an American invention, but in Bermuda everything wears a decidedly British face.

(Larry Blumenfeld is editor-at-large of *Jazziz* magazine, and a National Arts Journalism Fellow at Columbia University.)

For more information on the Bermuda Jazz Festival, including special air and hotel packages, call 800-BERMUDA or visit www.bermudajazz.com.

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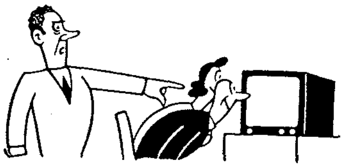
THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

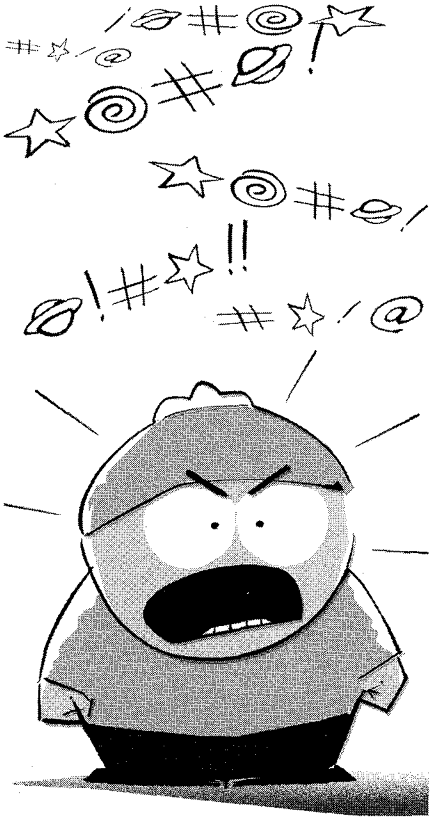
COMMENT
IT HAPPENS



The year 1968 is vaguely remembered as a high-water mark of anything-goes libertinism, but the truth is that in respectable circles one still had to watch one's language. Profanities of four letters, even comparatively mild ones, were not yet permissible in publications of general circulation. This presented a challenge to Raymond Sokolov, then a young book critic for *Newsweek*, when he was assigned to review a biography of Joseph Pujol, a French music-hall performer of the eighteen-nineties. Pujol's peculiar talent was the ability, as Sokolov put it, to "blow out a candle from a foot away and produce music from an aperture never so employed before or since." This talent hoisted Pujol to such fame that for a while he was a bigger box-office draw than Sarah Bernhardt. "More often than not he faced away from the audience, to show he had nothing concealed in the seat of his pants," Sokolov wrote. "Most surprising of all, he gave off no telltale odor." Sokolov—who is today the arts editor of the *Wall Street Journal*—concluded his Pujol review with a sly line that, around the *Newsweek* office at least, made him a legend in his own time: "His fin-de-siècle antics may not be to everyone's taste, but to a great many cultivated sensibilities, they definitely smack of art."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC PALMA

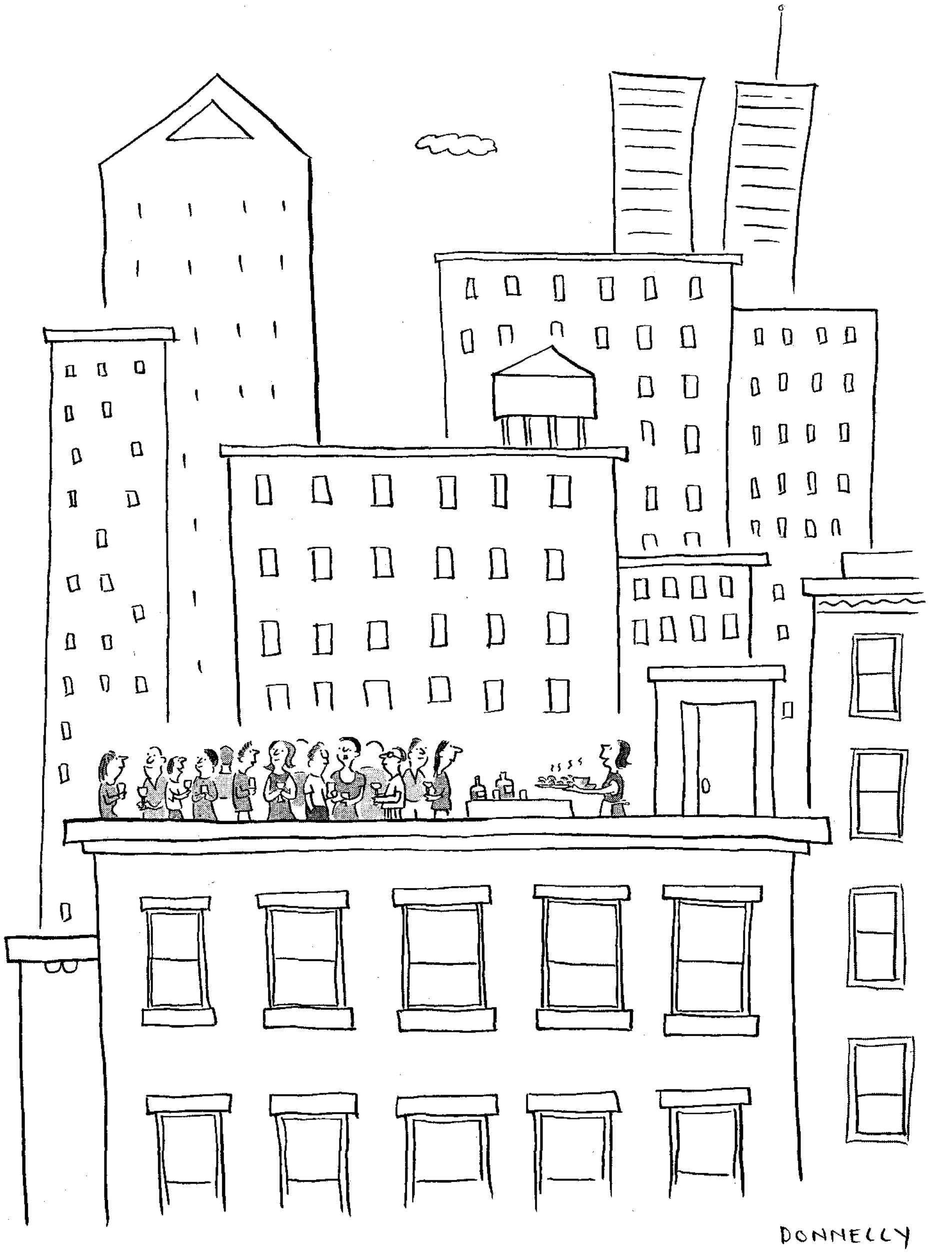
It is hardly necessary, at this late date (and in this magazine; see pages 42, 44, 46, et seq.), to point out that elaborate circumlocutions of this kind are no longer automatically required of the public media. Unelaborate ones will do, in those rare instances where they are not dispensed with altogether. Last Monday's Information Industries section of the *Times*, for example, brought the news that the season première of "South Park," on the Comedy Central cable channel, had used what the paper variously (if monotonously) called "the off-color word for dung," "the dung-related word," "the common word for dung," and (circularly) "the four-letter word for dung" (as distinct from the four-letter word for turd, say, or the four-letter word for poop) no fewer than one hundred and sixty-two times. This works out to approximately once every eight seconds. (The show's running time, exclusive of commercials, is twenty-two minutes.) Apparently this was some kind of record.



A hundred and sixty-two is a number both large and precise. The *Times* did not actually have to do the counting itself; "South Park" provided a running, odometer-like tally in a little box that appeared throughout the show in the lower left-hand corner of the screen. This was one of several witty touches in a program whose theme was the folly of getting all riled up about naughty words when the world abounds in cruelty and violence—the theme, as it happens, of many "South Park" episodes, as well as of a 1999 spinoff movie.

Profanity is a staple of "South Park," but in previous shows the relevant words, except for their initial consonants, had always been bleeped out. Surprisingly (or, on second thought, unsurprisingly), the unbleeped season première provoked hardly any controversy. A Comedy Central executive told the *Times* that the producers had received a grand total of four E-mails, all of them supportive. The closest thing to an indignant protest came from an organization called Morality in Media—and even that group's president, one Robert W. Peters, seemed to concede that the battle against dung is essentially over. "The question here is not whether the moral imbeciles who are responsible for such programming should have the right to fill the ears of consenting adults with grossly vulgar but non-obscene excretory language," Peters stated, "but whether they should be allowed to do it in a medium and at a time of day when large numbers of children are up watching TV." ("South Park" airs at 10 P.M.) In other words, unfettered access to non-obscene (i.e., nonsexual) excretory language is the unquestioned right of every red-blooded American moral imbecile, as long as that imbecile is a grownup. Kind of like voting, or coffee.

The battle against non-excretory obscene language hasn't been going too well, either. In fact, of the three categories of bad words—salacious obscenity, scatalogical profanity, and sacrilegious blasphemy—only blasphemy seems to have retained its capacity to yield unpleasant consequences, especially if racial, ethnic, sexual-preference-related, and disability-related slurs are included along with the religious ones.



"O.K., everybody, let's eat before the food gets dirty!"

There are perfectly good evolutionary reasons for all this. The shock value of salaciousness has been in decline ever since the Pill (among many other factors) began to undermine the system of stringent sexual controls that gave it its power. The taboo against the class of words epitomized by what that Morality in Media press release called, rather too vividly, the "four-letter word for fecal matter" has been made less urgent by the decline of the horse as the basic mode of urban transport, the universal adoption of modern plumbing, and the successful "Clean up after your dog" crusade that is the lasting legacy of former Mayor Ed Koch. (Ordure isn't as odious when it's not forever in your face.) Blasphemy, in this faith-based age, still cuts a certain amount of ice. Nobody risks getting punched in the nose anymore just for saying the "S" word. But if the producers of "South Park" ever decide to make an episode with a hundred and sixty-two jokes at the expense of the sacrament of Holy Communion, the Halakah of the Talmud, or the person of the Prophet Muhammad, then they had better be ready to take what Raymond Sokolov might call a humongous hit.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

DEPT. OF ENTRANCES

BILL AND GEORGE

Bill Clinton came to George Plimpton's house on a very hot night last week to attend a party for the new book "The Games We Played," to which both gentlemen contributed chapters. Clinton wrote about playing a kind of bat-and-ball in Hot Springs, Arkansas, as a kid, and Plimpton wrote about igniting cherry bombs to shoot small rubber balls into the sky.

"I don't know how to introduce anybody, because I don't know anybody here," Plimpton said in his genial, elegant manner as his Upper East Side home (which is also the headquarters of *The Paris Review*) filled up with perspiring guests. They made twilight small talk, regularly casting casual but eager glances toward the front door. Plimpton said, "I never had a President in the house—just lots of senators and would-be's, like John Lindsay and Bobby Kennedy and Ed Koch."

A red-haired young man approached. "I'm Steve Cohen, the editor of the book," he said. "My red-haired baby, Abigail, is here, and that's her mother holding her."

"I was just told the President likes to walk into a room with hordes," Plimpton said. "He likes a sea of people around him." He went outside to keep an eye out for Clinton.

"The President calls me Scoop," Cohen said. "I was just out of college in the summer of 1991, and I heard a rumor about him, so I jumped in my car and drove down to his campaign headquarters. I just showed up. I told him about the rumor, and it turned out to be false, but they've called me Scoop ever since. I was his press aide until 1995, when I shifted over to Mrs. Clinton. I haven't seen him since January. But he came through for the book."

A couple of very skinny, twentyish fellows in blazers introduced themselves as Billy and Dixon. "I wasn't old enough to vote for President Clinton," Billy said.

"In the last election I did the next best thing. I wrote in his name on the ballot," Dixon said. "Everybody here wants to vote for him again for something."

Plimpton dashed back into the room, sweating, and not his usual unflappable self. "I just met him out front!" he said. "Somebody handed him a child, and the child instantly began to cry. I then said something I'm sure he's heard a thousand times. I said, 'She must be a Republican!' Everything I said was out of order. But he's here!"

There he was, in a sea of sweating, shining faces, his own face cool and dry and cheerful, under a snowy thick mane of hair. His gray suit was uncreased, a yellow print Hermès necktie neatly done under his chin. When he walked in, the room seemed to tilt to one side, like a ship tossed by a wave, and suddenly all the party guests were pressed tightly into the spot where Clinton stood. He shook every extended hand with his right and signed autographs with his left. Everybody looked slaphappy to see him.

"Adoration!" someone said. "In 3-D!"

"He's got nice hands," Dixon said to Billy.

"This is a way to have a party!" Plimpton said.

Rose Styron emerged from the throng, and Bill Clinton called out "Rosey!" and extended his arms. She lunged toward him, and he encircled her with a long-lasting hug and gave her a kiss. Still holding on to her for a while, he signed more autographs and paid attention to what was being said to him.

"I'm Curtis Ellis," one middle-aged gentleman said. "How did you do at Belmont when you were last here?"

"I had a great time," Clinton said. "How 'bout you?"

"I did great. I picked the trifecta," Ellis said. "All three horses had about even money on them. The only way to make money was to bet the trifecta."

"What's the trifecta?" Clinton asked and listened carefully to the answer. "Thanks. I should have bet the trifecta," he said.

A couple of wineglasses were clinked for silence. Thanks were expressed by Steve Cohen's agent, at some length, to Plimpton and everybody who had come to the party. Then Clinton nodded to Scoop.

"You first?" Clinton asked. "After me? O.K."

So Clinton spoke first. "Scoop was virtually the first person who came to work for me in the campaign," he said, and put his arm around him. "Now he has a wife and a beautiful child"—he paused—"with, I might add, a great grip."

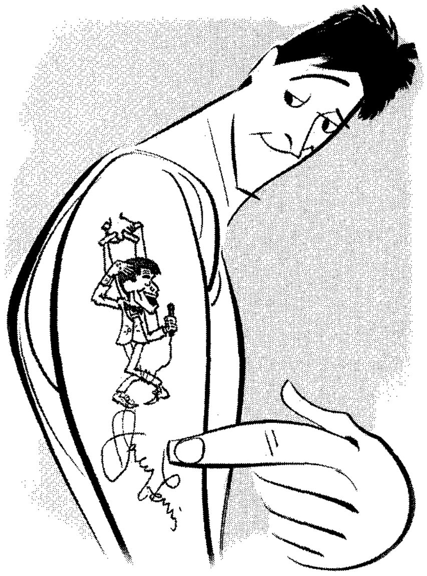
Much laughter. Much applause. Cries of "We miss you!"

Then it was Scoop's turn to talk, which he did, at length, in detail, about everybody who had helped him with the book. Clinton listened with serious and patient attention, as though he were being asked to consider a report on nuclear weapons. Then, forty minutes after he'd arrived, he was hustled by his security detail out the front door and into a black S.U.V. One guest heard him say something about running late for another book party, at Richard Holbrooke's house.

—*Lillian Ross*

HEY LAA-AADY! A NUTTY TATTOO

Ray James classifies the caricature of Jerry Lewis on his friend Don Perazzo's right shoulder as "a totally ironic tattoo." Perazzo, though he doesn't refute the assessment, feels that it calls for further explanation. "I got it because I had sort of a love of Jerry's comedy," he says. "And I also loved that he was a freak and a nut and out of his mind—I mean, he calls the Muscular Dystrophy kids God's mistakes." Perazzo acquired the tattoo, which depicts Lewis as a knock-kneed marionette caught in the tangles of a microphone cord, in 1995. He had it drawn to his own specifications, based on three sources: a videocassette box of "The Godfather" (the puppet motif), Lewis's trademark caricature (the head), and a cartoon from a book about Lewis written in French (the body).



Don Perazzo

The tattoo had its largest public showing the other night, in front of five hundred people at Congregation Rodeph Sholom on West Eighty-third Street, where Jerry Lewis was appearing at a Learning Annex seminar entitled "Jerry Lewis on the Human Condition: Life, Laughter, and Healing." Perazzo, a thirty-nine-year-old standup comic who pays the bills as a lab technician breaking down blood into components, and James, a former writer for "The Daily Show," had come to pay their respects, along with Perazzo's fiancée, Carmela Tapino ("Basically, she was there for the tattoo," Perazzo said). Perazzo's big moment—and the tattoo's—came during the question-and-answer portion of the evening. A middle-aged man who had announced "I saw you in 'Damn Yankees' fourteen times, Mr. Lewis—I'm addicted to you," had just posed for an onstage picture, clutching his heart and weeping. Then Perazzo stood up and raised his hand. After scanning the crowd, Lewis pointed to him and said, "Yes, you." Perazzo paused, like a poker player savoring the moment before laying down a full house. "Jerry," he finally said, "I've got a tattoo of you on my right arm." There was a brief silence, and the audience erupted, clapping, stamping, and shouting "Whoo!" Lewis cackled—a high-pitched, plosive "Paah!"—and summoned Perazzo up onto the stage.

"Jerry autographed the tattoo, we hugged, and I shook his hand. The crowd went wild," Perazzo recalled. "It was like I was in some whole other zone. When I jumped off the stage, I was surrounded by all these people who wanted to get my picture. Several of them wanted their picture taken with the tattoo. It was pretty weird."

During all this, James had managed to call his cousin Tony, whose wife is a tattoo artist in Queens. She was about to close up shop for the night, but after James filled Tony in on the situation and Tony told his wife about it she agreed to remain open if they could get there quickly. James pulled Perazzo up the aisle, out the front door, and into a taxi, which they took to Union Square, where they jumped out, bolted down into the subway, caught the L train, and rode to Grand Street in Brooklyn. There Tony was waiting in a car to drive them to his wife's tattoo parlor, in Middle Village. When they arrived, Perazzo rolled up the right sleeve of his white T-shirt, and Tony's wife, plying the electric needle and indelible pigment of her trade, tattooed over Jerry Lewis's signature.

With the addition of this fourth, and crowning, element, Perazzo considers his tattoo complete. He regrets that it required his early departure from the seminar, though. Perazzo missed the chance to hear Lewis recite from the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, which he had promised to do "with all the love that comes in through the aorta, into the heart, and into the brain."

—*Adam Green*

ON THE BENCH

A LITTLE PATIENCE ON N.B.A. DRAFT DAY

Last week, the National Bastketball Association held its 2001 draft in the Theatre at Madison Square Garden. To make professional basketball's inspirational story lines all the more evident, the league this year decided to turn the greenroom for the top fourteen prospective draftees into more of a holding pen, putting the players down near the stage, visible to all, and separated from the live audience by only a three-foot-tall bunting partition. For more than an hour, these young men were drafted more or less as forecast—thirteen of them among the first fourteen picks. That left Brendan Haywood, an almost graceful seven-foot-tall center from the University of North Carolina, the only player still in the greenroom.

The Orlando Magic had the fifteenth pick and chose the DePaul center Steven Hunter, somebody who was not in attendance and who was not Brendan Haywood. Haywood, holding a basketball in his lap, began tapping his feet. A league employee came by, put her hands on his shoulders, and whispered something to him, and he forced a smile. He has a shaved head and even, cherubic features, and wore a blue suit with stripes of alternating widths and the top buttons done up. He was flanked, in his corner of the greenroom, by his mother, his godmother, two friends from high school, and his college roommate. His mother, Barbara Haywood, had on a black silk blouse and pants, both embroidered with pink flowers, a pink-on-pink straw kettle hat, and pink floral earrings with pearls. The TNT network, shooting from the other end of the stage and broadcasting live on screens all over the theatre, flashed a shot of Haywood sitting at his table. A few scattered cheers went up in the auditorium.

With the sixteenth selection, the Charlotte Hornets passed on Haywood. Five minutes later, so did the team picking seventeenth, the Toronto Raptors. Next up were the Houston Rockets. "I would go with Brendan Haywood," the TNT commentator Kenny Smith said on the air. "I like Haywood." Houston did not, apparently. With the eighteenth pick, the Rockets took Stanford's Jason Collins.

Haywood leaned forward, elbows on his knees, and pressed his palm against his face. Up nineteenth, the Portland Trail Blazers selected Zach Randolph, a pudgy forward with scant experience playing college ball. Haywood turned to the TV and watched an old clip of Randolph loping upcourt.

And then, with the twentieth choice, the Cleveland Cavaliers drafted Haywood. Sighs could be heard down in the greenroom. He stood, hugged his mother, shaking his head as he made his way to the stage, and embraced David Stern, the N.B.A.'s commissioner. He was given a Cleveland Cavaliers baseball cap. "It got kind of nerve-racking once I got past fifteen," Haywood said, a few moments later. Cleveland, he added, is "a great city."

"Everybody feels relieved," his mother said.

Haywood ambled into the draftees' club room. Around him, the other players were talking on the house phones to their new teams, but as he sat there no one from Cleveland called. After a while, he dialled up his old high-school coach, in Greensboro, North Carolina, on his cell phone, to find out what was going on, and the coach made some calls of his own. Apparently, a deal was in the works. Five minutes later, it was announced: the Cleveland Cavaliers had traded Brendan Haywood to the Orlando Magic. Somebody handed Haywood a Magic cap, and gingerly, with two hands, he put on the new one. "I've always said I like Orlando," he said.

—*Eric Konigsberg*

MONOPOLY DEPT.
THE MICROSOFT VERDICT

At the Rockefeller Center headquarters of AOL Time Warner last Thursday, one of the company's senior executives took time to watch the breaking news. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia had delivered a ruling in the Microsoft antitrust case, and, as depicted on the cable television networks, the verdict appeared lopsidedly simple: Microsoft triumphs. Reporters and anchors had not yet read the hundred-and-twenty-five-page decision, but producers had orders to sum it all up right away. So CNBC, CNN, and Fox News latched onto the court's decision to overturn the district court's proposed remedy to split Microsoft in two, and declared a victory for Bill Gates.

At AOL Time Warner, however, there was a surprising serenity. The senior executive was exchanging instant messages about the case while watching the television news, and he was smiling. This seemed odd, since AOL had testified against Microsoft in the trial. Then AOL Time Warner's general counsel, Paul Cappuccio, came into the office, and he was smiling, too. He declared, with some zest, that the verdict was in fact a solid defeat for Microsoft.

Both sides, it turns out, had reason to be pleased. The higher court did spare Microsoft from a breakup, finding that the lower court rushed to order a remedy "without considering the evidence Microsoft sought to introduce." It rejected the lower court's conclusion that Microsoft had illegally attempted to monopolize the Web-browser market. What's more, in returning the case to the district court, the Appeals Court decreed that a new judge should preside. It rebuked the trial judge, Thomas Penfield Jackson, for talking, sometimes indiscreetly, to reporters and thus for calling "into question the integrity of the judicial process." Gates appeared on CNBC Thursday evening and said of the decision, "They reversed most of what was in the district-court ruling."

But the core of the government's case—and of Judge Jackson's earlier decision—was left intact: that Microsoft's Windows operating system held a monopoly over the desktop P.C. market, and that Microsoft used its "market power" to unlawfully "maintain its monopoly in the operating system market," violating the Sherman Antitrust Act. Microsoft, the Appeals Court found, unfairly used its monopoly power to strong-arm computer manufacturers, Internet access providers, Internet content providers, independent software venders, and companies like AOL, Apple, Intel, and Sun Microsystems. The court did not remove the threat of an imposed remedy but simply ordered a new court to devise one. It did not, as Microsoft expected, affirm the company's right to bundle (Microsoft prefers the word "integrate") new features with Windows. It did not throw out as "biased" Judge Jackson's ruling and facts, as Microsoft had urged it to do. And the decision did not end Microsoft's legal ordeal.

As it happens, Judge Jackson had given me a series of interviews, including one in which he said that Bill Gates "has a Napoleonic concept of himself and his company." The Court of Appeals took Judge Jackson to task for what it considered indiscretions in his dealings with the press, and suggested that the ten hours of taped interviews I did with him could not have been "monologues," and that, in the course of inducing "conversation," I might have tainted the Judge with my personal views. I never shared any of my opinions about the case with Judge Jackson. As for the charge of inducing conversation, I plead guilty.

No matter how high Microsoft's stock jumps, the government has the edge. Microsoft has been found guilty and will be penalized. It may have to endure another trial. An attempt will be made to get the government and Microsoft to negotiate an out-of-court settlement, but that won't be easy. The attorneys general of the nineteen states who were part of the original lawsuit must unanimously agree to drop the case before a settlement can be reached, and they will be less inclined to do so, having been fortified with a verdict vindicating their assertion that Microsoft was a predatory monopolist. With the Appeals Court ruling and with pressure from the more hawkish states, President Bush won't want to appear to be letting Microsoft off the hook.

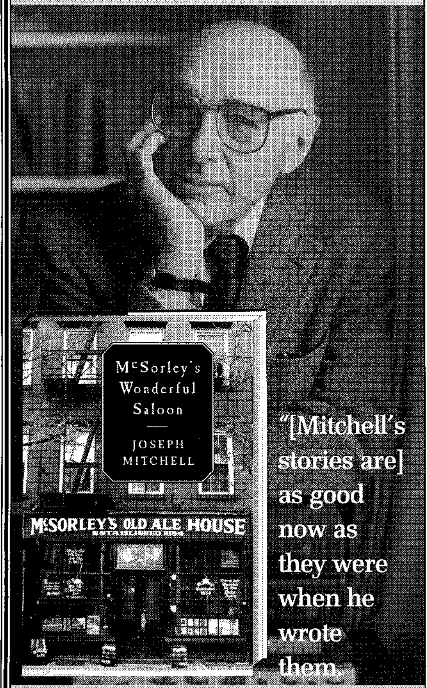
This fall, Microsoft will introduce its new Windows XP operating system. Its marketing strategy will be, as always, to capitalize on its Windows operating system by adding free features. The company is expected to add new digital-photography software, instant messaging, and streaming video and audio, and may continue to make it more difficult for competitors' software to function on Windows. But a company that has been found guilty of monopoly-law violations may not be free to pursue such a strategy. AOL, RealNetworks, Sun, and others may bring lawsuits, compelling the new district-court judge to police Microsoft more closely. Gates hoped that this round would be the last, but it seems that the fight is destined to drag on.

Paul Cappuccio said that AOL Time Warner will press to assure that Microsoft has to "open its desktop" to competing products. This is what the government did when it compelled the Baby Bells to make their telephone wires available as "common carriers" for competitors. And it is what the F.C.C. did last January when it forced AOL Time Warner to open its cable wire to at least three other Internet service providers.

"When the nation's second-highest court rules seven-to-none that you are a monopolist that has violated the antitrust laws," the senior AOL Time Warner executive said with a grin, "it's not a good day, no matter how hard you spin it."

—*Ken Auletta*

"There are no little people in this book. They are as big as you are, whoever you are."
—Joseph Mitchell



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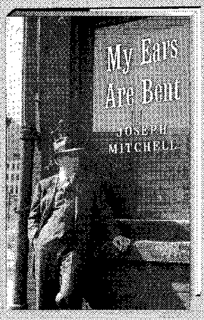

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LETTER FROM GAZA

THE MARTYR STRATEGY

What does the new phase of terrorism signify?

BY JEFFREY GOLDBERG

One day last month, I visited the terrorist Abdullah Shami at his home in the Shejaiya neighborhood of Gaza City. Shejaiya is said to be a stronghold of Islamic Jihad, a group that conducts suicide attacks against Israeli targets, and Shami is the group's leader in Gaza. He lives on the third floor of a concrete-and-plaster apartment house. Before I went upstairs, I met three of his sons in the sand-covered alleyway that leads to the building. The sun was boiling hot, and the building provided shade for the boys and their friends. They were playing a game called *shuhada*, which means martyrs. The youngest son, Ahmed, who is three, played the *shaheed*, the martyr, and charged a make-believe Jewish bunker. The other boys made the sound of rifles firing, and Ahmed dropped to the ground and pretended to be dead. His brothers Mahmoud, who is five, and Muhammad, who is six, then carried his limp body down the alleyway, and performed a mock funeral. The game ended when Ahmed rose from his imaginary grave, shouted "*Allahu Akbar!*" and giggled.

An Islamic Jihad official accompanied me to Shami's sitting room, which was furnished with huge red-and-gold couches. Framed photographs of the Dome of the Rock hung on the walls. Shami, a genial and open-faced man of forty-five, greeted me warmly. He is tall, and has smooth skin and a carefully trimmed beard. He was dressed in a white djellabah and a gray cape with a gold fringe.

The meeting took place during a particularly tense moment in Gaza. Three days earlier, a suicide bomber from the terrorist wing of Hamas, a fundamentalist group, had blown himself up in the middle of a crowd of teen-age girls outside a disco in Tel Aviv. The attack killed twenty-two people, including the bomber, who was infected with hepatitis B, and whose flying body parts may have infected some of the survivors.

After the disco attack, Gazans were seized by dread: surely the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, would retaliate without mercy. But Sharon declared that "restraint is strength" and staved off right-wingers in his Cabinet who demanded severe reprisals. It was an uncharacteristic and widely praised (and presumably temporary) reaction on Sharon's part; but he seemed to sense, correctly, that the West had become repulsed by Palestinian terror attacks, and that such feelings could be exploited by his government.

But, nine months into the Palestinian war of independence, the people of Gaza do not trust Sharon's declarations. As I drove through Gaza City with a Palestinian friend, I noticed dozens of men in the uniforms of the various Palestinian security services; they were afraid to enter office buildings that could be—or already had been—targeted by Israel. Shami, however, did not seem unnerved by the prospect of death at the hands of Israel, even though Israeli agents had assassinated the founder of his group, Fathi Shikaki, on Malta, in 1995.

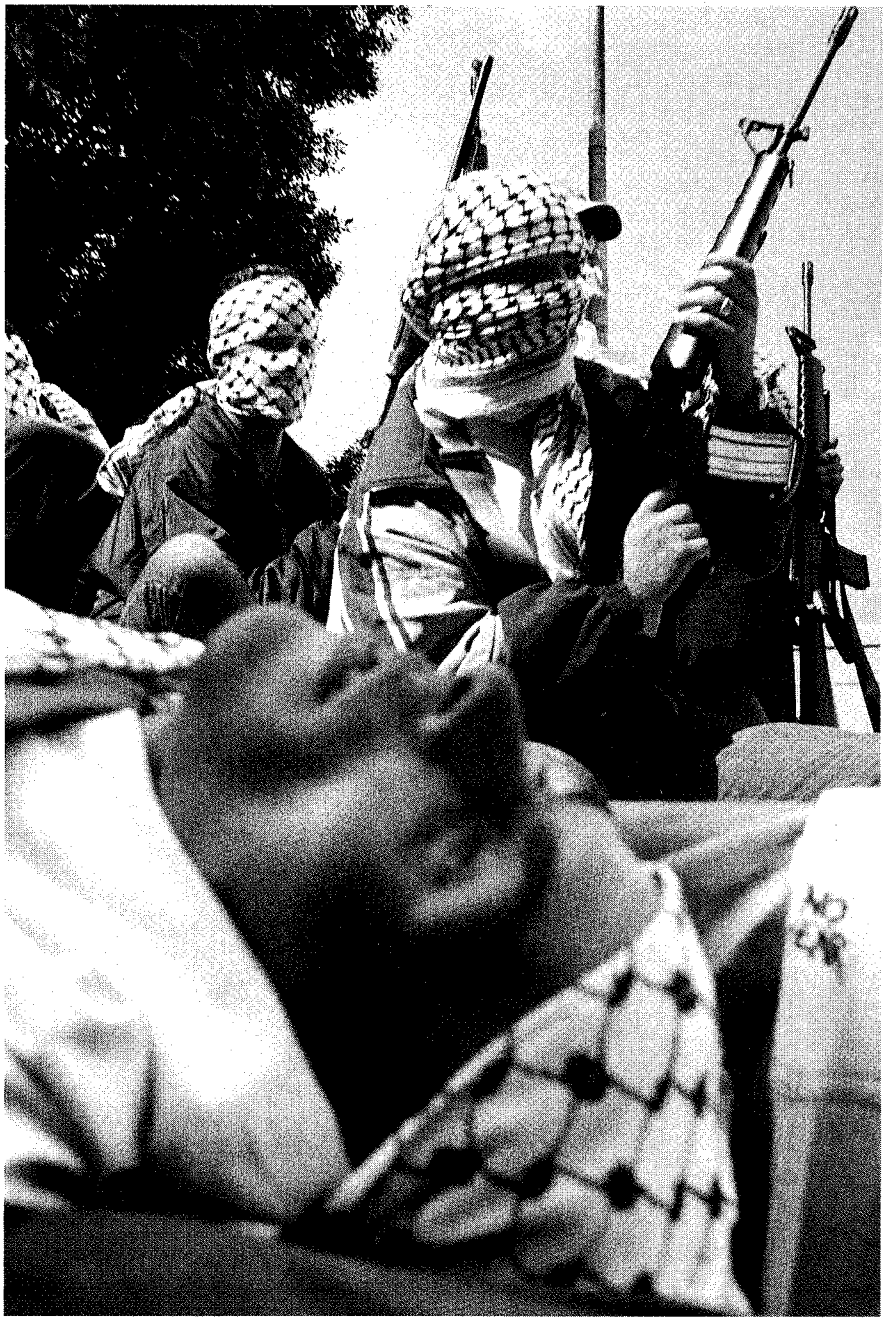
"Fear is a human sensation," Shami said. "If I say that I am not afraid, I am not human. But fear will not stop me from doing what needs to be done." What his group needs to do, he said, is kill more Jews.

Over the past month, a platoon of international envoys and foreign ministers and would-be peace negotiators have attempted to keep alive a fragile ceasefire negotiated by George Tenet, the C.I.A. director. But few people outside the King David Hotel, in Jerusalem, where these envoys have situated themselves (they are mostly alone in the hotel, tourism to the Holy Land having vanished months ago), believe that the ceasefire will lead to anything except its own failure. Among many Palestinians, in particular, there is depression, and a vow to increase the violence, which has so far gained them nothing except more than five hundred dead and the unfulfilled promise of aid money from the Gulf Arabs. Palestinian society, in its desolation, seems more susceptible than ever to the romance of martyrdom, which explains the resurgent popularity of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the two groups that sponsor suicide bombings.

For Abdullah Shami, ceasefires are distractions, short pauses in the otherwise unrelenting march to Jerusalem. "We must fight Israel until it is gone," he told me. The Jews who are alive can stay in Palestine, he said, adding that "during history, the Jews were most secure under Muslim rule."

On the spectrum of Palestinian militancy, Islamic Jihad stands alone. Unlike Hamas, which also runs schools and hospitals and mosques, Islamic Jihad is exclusively dedicated to terrorism. Hamas claims thousands of members, and hundreds of thousands of supporters; Israeli and American experts say that the hard core of Islamic Jihad consists of several cells in the West Bank and Gaza, with, collectively, several dozen members. (The group's paramount leader, Abdullah Ramadan Shalah, is in Damascus.) Hamas is a threat to the rule of Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority, which is dominated by men from Fatah, Hamas's rival. But Islamic Jihad, though more radical than Fatah, is also regarded as more subservient to Arafat than is Hamas, Israeli experts say.

"Arafat has excellent intelligence, and he could take apart Islamic Jihad quite easily," said Boaz Ganor, the director of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, in Herzliyya, a city north of Tel Aviv. "I believe that Arafat preserved Islamic Jihad in order to use its terrorists when needed. What he needed was another Black September. The whole idea is deniability." Black September was the group responsible for the 1972 attack on Israeli athletes in Munich. It was initially thought to be independent of Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization, but it is now widely accepted that Black September operated under Arafat's control.



Ideological gaps among some Palestinians have shrunk, with disturbing consequences.

KAI WIEDENHÖFER/LOOKAT

During my visit with Abdullah Shami, I hoped that he would comment on a recent controversy concerning a fatwa, or religious ruling, issued by the Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheik Abd Al-Aziz bin Abdallah Al-Sheik, in which suicide bombing was declared contrary to the tenets of Islam. "This is not a part of jihad, and I fear that it is merely killing oneself," the Mufti was quoted as saying.

The ruling of the Saudi mufti was not motivated by moral or theological qualms about the murder of Jews. The questions he raised had to do with the threat that suicide poses to the eternal soul of the Muslim bomber himself. Even so, the fatwa has been met with scorn in many quarters. The head of the Hamas-affiliated Palestinian Islamic Scholars Association, Sheik Hamed Al-Bitawi, stated that "jihad is a collective duty. . . . However, if infidels conquer even an inch of the Muslims' land, as happened with the occupation of Palestine by the Jews, then jihad becomes an individual duty, and, therefore, suicide attacks are permissible."

Shami raised his eyebrows when I mentioned the mufti. He said, "There are some people who are ignorant of certain aspects of Shari'a"—Islamic religious law. "This is not suicide but martyrdom. It is a duty of Muslims." Islamic Jihad bombers, Shami explained, are not men who seek suicide. "We do not take

"Instead of 'It sucks' you could say, 'It doesn't speak to me.'"

• •

depressed people. If there were a one-in-a-thousand chance that a person was suicidal, we would not allow him to martyr himself. In order to be a martyr bomber, you have to want to live."

A recent poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion found that seventy-six per cent of Palestinian respondents approved of suicide bombings that targeted Israelis. And Palestinian religious leaders have for some time been praising the virtues of suicide in the service of their cause. Three years ago, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheik Ekrima Sabri, who is the leading Muslim official in Palestinian-controlled territory, explained to me the role of martyrdom in Islamic thinking. "The Muslim embraces death," he said. "Look at the society of the Israelis. It is a selfish society that loves life. These are not people who are eager to die for their country and their God. The Jews will leave this land rather than die, but the Muslim is happy to die."

The attacks have also won support in the wider Arab world. In a column published in May in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Usbu* (and disseminated by the Middle East Media Research Institute, in Washington, D.C.), the writer Amru Nasif called for mass suicide attacks against Israelis, and volunteered himself for a suicide mission. "Let us do some mathematical calculations," he wrote. "Two hundred and fifty Palestinians have signed up for martyrdom operations, and it is not impossible to raise this number to a thousand throughout the Arab world. The average harvest of each act of martyrdom is ten dead and fifty wounded. Thus, a thousand acts of martyrdom would leave the Zionists with at least ten thousand dead and fifty thousand wounded." Nasif also pleaded with Allah to let him "become a *shaheed*" and grant him "the honor of reaping as great a harvest as possible of Israeli lives."

Many Palestinians worry about the glorification of suicide bombers. Ziad Abu-Amr, an expert on Islamic movements at Birzeit University, in the West Bank, and the chairman of the political committee of the Palestine Legislative Council, sees his Gaza constituents embracing suicide attacks as a response to their desperation.

"The entire society is drifting toward religiosity, not necessarily because it has discovered God in the last eight months but because—in the sombre climate of destruction—war, unemployment, and depression cause people to seek solace, and they're going to Allah," he said. "On Friday, at the time of prayer, the streets are blocked now because of the number of people going to mosque. This is a new phenomenon."

One of Abdullah Shami's sons, Hussam, is eighteen years old. I asked Shami if he wants Hussam to become a suicide bomber. "Of course I do," he said. "But it's his own choice. I won't push him in either direction."

As the interview ended, Mahmoud, Ahmed, and Muhammad joined us in the sitting room. Ahmed, the three-year-old, is chubby-cheeked and insouciant. He was wearing a striped yellow shirt, shorts, and sandals, and his hair had been neatly combed before he entered the room. It was impossible for me to understand the impulse that would prompt his father to contemplate sacrificing this child.

"All children who are born eventually die," Shami said. "And death is painful, except in the case of martyrs, who feel no pain as they commit the act that leads to their martyrdom." He added, "Our bodies are the only weapons we have. We don't want to use our bodies as weapons. Maybe you should tell the Israelis to send us other weapons, like Katyushas. Then we won't use our bodies against them anymore." As I left, Ahmed gave me a black Islamic Jihad flag as a keepsake, and slapped me five.

On the morning of May 7th, Israeli surveillance aircraft patrolling the eastern Mediterranean began tracking the movements of a Lebanese fishing trawler called the Santorini. The Mediterranean is a parking lot of fishing boats and cargo ships and yachts, but the Santorini raised suspicions early. "It was a fishing boat that was not fishing," the commander of Israel's Navy, Admiral Yedidia Ya'ari, said one day at his office in Camp Rabin, the headquarters of the Israel Defense Forces, in Tel Aviv. Soon enough, two Israeli missile boats, joined by two attack boats, intercepted the Santorini on rough seas. Soldiers from Flotilla Thirteen, the naval commando unit, boarded the boat, meeting no resistance from the crew of four. The boarding party quickly discovered thirty-nine barrels filled with Katyusha rockets, anti-tank grenades, and Strella missiles. The crew consisted of veteran Lebanese smugglers, but they were in the employ of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, an extremist group based in Damascus and headed by an aging terrorist named

Ahmed Jibril. The barrels were to be set in the water off Gaza at a preselected site—a kind of floating dead drop, Ya'ari said—where they would be retrieved by Palestinians sailing from Gaza.

At a press conference in Damascus a few days later, Jibril, while conceding that the weapons were his, said that the Santorini was the fourth boat he had dispatched to Gaza and only the first to be intercepted. Weapons such as Katyushas and SA-7 Strellas pose little threat to the Israeli Army: they are strategic, not tactical. "These are pretty crappy weapons," Ya'ari said, "but the SA-7 can take down a Boeing 747."

The seizure of the Santorini was a significant event—a foreshadowing of the sort of conflict that Abdullah Shami hopes to see. The Palestinian revolt, which is known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, after the mosque that sits atop the Temple Mount, in Jerusalem, has gone through three phases so far. The first was the seemingly spontaneous eruption of rock-throwing and protest that followed Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount last September, when Sharon was still the opposition leader. Then came a phase in which Jewish settlers and Army outposts in the West Bank and Gaza—as well as the Gilo neighborhood of Jerusalem—came under Palestinian rifle fire. The third phase was spearheaded by Hamas and Islamic Jihad: the suicide bombings, as well as mortar attacks launched against targets in Gaza and inside Israel by other factions. Today, the conflict teeters between ceasefire and a fourth phase, this one of violent escalation. The use of strategic weapons could initiate the kind of cataclysmic fighting between Israelis and Palestinians that would lead to a full-blown regional war.

"There are three scenarios," Boaz Ganor, the terrorism expert, said. "One, Arafat stops the violence. Two, there's an ongoing war of attrition and Arafat waits for an Israeli mistake—an Israeli shell is bound to hit some schoolchildren. This leads to an international outcry that requires Israel to make more concessions. Three, Arafat decides to escalate, starting a war. If he has the ability to shoot down an El Al plane, or to launch Katyushas from the West Bank into the Tel Aviv suburbs, he would force a powerful Israeli response. The disturbing part is that it is all in Arafat's hands."

Israeli intelligence experts are convinced that forces controlled by Arafat were to be the ultimate recipients of the weapons on the Santorini. But Arafat's ways are mysterious, and it is difficult to shake from the Israelis hard proof—if it exists—of his intentions. In recent days, under American pressure, Arafat has ordered his security services to clamp down on certain types of anti-Israel attacks. In so doing, he undermined his own claim that he could not control the violence of the past nine months. But it also seems true that there are groups operating against Israel that exist outside his direct control. Among these, along with Hamas, are Jibril's Popular Front and the Lebanese Hezbollah, which is sponsored by Iran and which has allied itself with Islamic Jihad. And factions loyal to Osama bin Laden, who many believe is trying to insert himself into the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by violence, are not beholden to Arafat. So many splintered organizations make any Palestinian agenda confusing to the point of stupefaction, but it is fair to say that the ideological gaps among all these groups have lately shrunk, with disturbing consequences.

In order to find out what Ahmed Jibril was planning for his intercepted shipment of rockets, I went one afternoon to a meeting of his Popular Front. The meeting was held at a wedding hall called the Casablanca, which is situated in the heights of Ramallah, on the West Bank, just north of Jerusalem. The meeting drew a large crowd, roughly five hundred people, including representatives from the main religious and secular fighting groups. Strung on a wire running across the ballroom were posters featuring the tired face of Jibril, a secularist who is more closely associated with the Red Army and the Baader-Meinhof gang of the nineteen-seventies than with the bin Ladens and Islamic Jihads of today.

The program was ponderous; each

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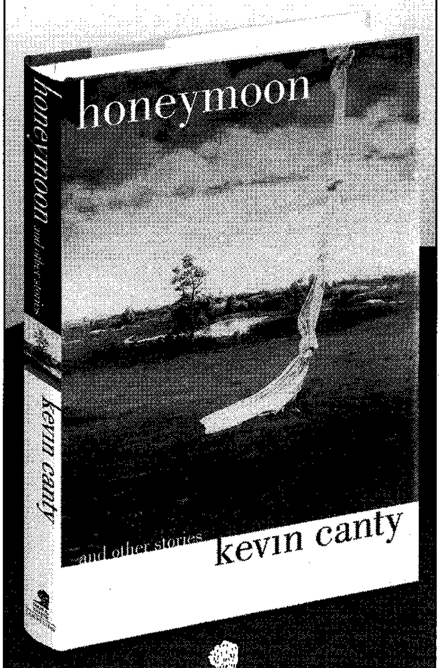

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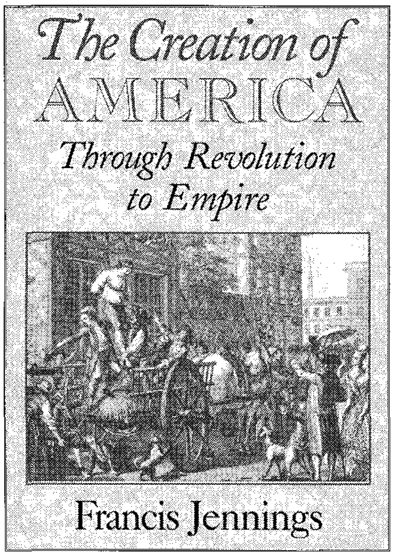

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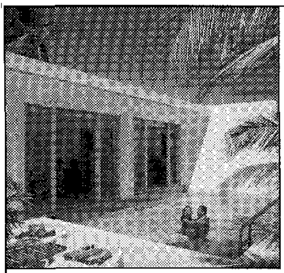

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THE WORD "I"

Harder to breathe
near the summit, and harder

to remember
where you came from,

why you came

Winter's
harder, and harder to say
the word "I"
with a straight face,
and sleep—

who can sleep. Who has time

to prepare for the big day
when he will be required
to say goodbye to everyone, including
the aforementioned pronoun, relinquish
all earthly attachment
completely, and witness
the end of the world—

harder in other words
not to love it

not to love it so much

—*Franz Wright*

faction leader spoke in praise of Jibril and of the Palestinians killed in the current uprising. The local Hamas chief, Hassan Yusuf, rose to celebrate the poll results that showed strong public support for suicide bombings. Yusuf earlier told me that, shortly after a Hamas bomber killed several Israelis at a shopping mall in Netanya in May, he and his followers handed out candy at their mosque in celebration.

The Casablanca was humid and filled with smoke, and men with guns circulated through the crowd. Sweet Turkish coffee, distributed in small plastic cups, kept everyone awake. Then Marwan Barghouti entered the hall, flanked by uniformed men carrying AK-47s. His presence caused a stir; he is the Fatah leader of the uprising in the West Bank, and is often mentioned as a possible successor to Yasir Arafat. It was surprising to see Barghouti at the Popular Front meeting. He is, after all, a Fatah man; Fatah is Yasir Arafat's faction, and Arafat and Ahmed Jibril are antagonists.

But Barghouti, whom I have interviewed several times over the past months, has changed. At the outset of the uprising, Barghouti was fond of noting that he counted among his friends several members of the Israeli Parliament. He no longer makes such claims. Just two weeks ago, Israel accused him of being directly involved in the killing of a Greek Orthodox monk who was shot to death outside Jerusalem by gunmen who apparently mistook him for an Orthodox Jew. Barghouti is said to have provided the gunmen with their weapons, a charge he has denied. The day before the Popular Front meeting, I had talked to Barghouti in his office, on the third floor of a five-story residential apartment building in Ramallah. He is afraid of assassination—one of his deputies was killed by a missile fired from an Israeli helicopter—and this fear is apparently why he has placed his headquarters between apartments that house families with children. During the interview, I asked Barghouti an obvious question: What would Israel have to do to bring an end to the uprising?

"We need one hundred per cent of Gaza, one hundred per cent of the West Bank, one hundred per cent of East Jerusalem, and the right of return for refugees," he said. I pointed out that former Prime Minister Ehud Barak had, at the Camp David summit last year, offered the Palestinians a series of dramatic concessions: a free Gaza, around ninety per cent of the West Bank, a capital in East Jerusalem, and so on. "No!" Nothing less than a hundred per cent is acceptable, he said. And if you get a hundred per cent? Will that end the conflict? Barghouti smiled, and then said something impolitic for a Fatah man. "Then we could talk about bigger things," he said. Such as? "I've always thought that a good idea would be one state for all the peoples," he said. A secular democratic Palestine? "We don't have to call it Palestine," he replied. "We can call it something else."

Perhaps no one better personified the enigma of Palestinian desire than Faisal Husseini, who was the chief P.L.O. figure in Jerusalem and who, at the time of his death, of a heart attack, in late May, was hailed as an exemplar of coexistence—a "political prisoner turned peace advocate," the *Times* called him. Two years ago, in his office in East Jerusalem, Husseini told me, "The only hope is for the Israelis to give up their dreams, and for the Palestinians to give up their dreams. It is the only way we will free ourselves from our nightmares."

But in his last months Husseini spoke at a conference in Teheran which brought together leaders of Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad. And in a speech delivered in Beirut in April he said, "We may lose or win, but our eyes will continue to aspire to the strategic goal; namely, Palestine from the river to the sea"—from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. "Whatever we get now cannot make us forget this supreme truth."

In recent months, it was as if Barghouti and Husseini had fired up a time-travel machine and taken us back to 1968, when the leaders of the P.L.O. still spoke unabashedly of erasing Israel from the map of the world.

Dusk settled over Ramallah, and Ahmed Jibril's followers left the Casablanca. Husam Arafat, Jibril's representative on the West Bank, sat on a folding chair and answered questions. He is a lawyer, humorless and ascetic in appearance. He, too, spoke of a "Palestine from the river to the sea." When I told him I was surprised to see Barghouti at his meeting, he appeared offended, and waved over the Fatah leader, who was surrounded by a clutch of admirers.

"He says you shouldn't be here," Arafat told Barghouti.

"Why?" Barghouti asked me.

"Because Yasir Arafat and Ahmed Jibril are enemies, and because your ideologies are so different."

Barghouti took Husam Arafat's hand. "We're all fighting together now," Barghouti said.

I asked Barghouti about the Santorini. "It's too bad what happened," he said. "If someone sends you a gift, you should always try to accept it."

After Barghouti and his men left the hall, I asked Arafat why his boss, Ahmed Jibril, was sending rockets to Gaza.

"The General Command decided that it would provide a full range of military services to the uprising," he said. I asked him if he hoped to shoot down planes, but he just smiled wanly and changed the subject.

It turned out that there was something on his mind. "Everyone keeps saying that Hamas and Islamic Jihad invented suicide bombing," he said. "But this isn't true. It was the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command that invented the suicide bombing. We did the first one in 1974, before there was even a Hamas. I think people don't understand the proper role of the Popular Front in the history of the struggle. It was us, not Hamas." I promised him that this fact would be noted. ♦

Headline in the Times.

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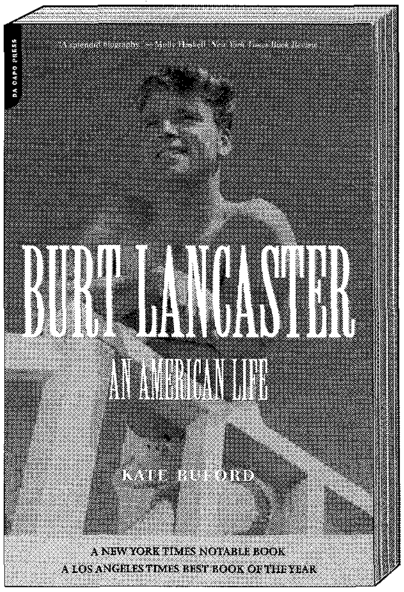
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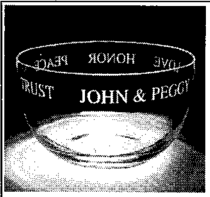

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A NO-BULL GUIDE TO INVESTMENT TERMS

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

Bear

Symbol used by brokers to denote fear once the market has fallen by twenty per cent. Considered by some illogical, inasmuch as bears are not typically fearful of falling markets. Some scholars think it may be a misspelling of the English word "bare," what many clients are from the waist up after they have "lost their shirts."

Blue chip

Popular brand of tortilla snack. Also, stocks that perform consistently well until you purchase them.

Bond

Famous British agent. Also, type of relationship that does not usually develop between broker and client.

Bull

What a broker feeds clients when they ask what has happened to all their money.

Capitalization

Process by which lowercase letters become uppercase letters. Compare: *Large-cap*—Companies that use large letters in their logos; e.g., GM. *Small-cap*—Companies that use all lowercase letters in their logos; e.g., amazon.com.

Commodities

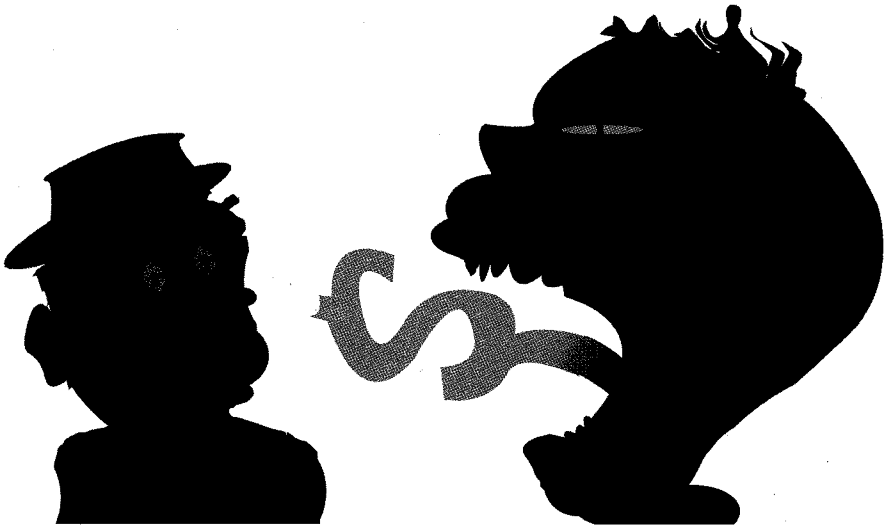
Something tangible, of value, such as gold, sugar, beets, etc., as opposed to advice given by a broker.

Downside

Term preferred by brokers to describe financial calamity. Considered less alarming to client's ear than "loss," "crater," "nosedive," "tank," "flameout," "bankruptcy," "Chapter 11," or "destitution." Often used in conjunction with "potential," "risk," and "exposure," all belonging to the client. Compare: *Downturn*—What a stock will experience as soon as you have bought it. *Down*—Direction of a human body after leaping out the window of an office building following a call from a broker.

401(k)

Four hundred and one thousand dollars, the amount of money you had to retire on before you invested it. Compare: *401*—Four hundred and one dollars, the amount of money left in your pension fund after you invested it.



Futures

What you and your family will not have if you let the broker talk you into buying a gold, wheat, pork-belly, or soy "contract."

I.P.O.

Broker shorthand for "Investor Pissed Off."

I.R.A.

Violent Irishmen. Also, the first three letters of "irate," an adjective describing how investors frequently feel.

Limited partnership

Investment arrangement whereby everyone else gets paid first. Compare: *General partnership*—Investment arrangement whereby you get sued first.

Long bond

Thirty-year U.S. Treasury bond. Compare: *Longish bond*—Term used by old-money types for any bond longer than a thirty-year bond. *Way-long bond*—Term used by Gen-Xers for a thirty-year bond.

Options

What you had before you invested all your money in the stock market.

Precious metals

The pocket change that you have left after your broker has lost all the bills.

Recession

Term preferred over "crash" or "tank" for what the economy is in after two consecutive financial quarters of crashing and tanking.

Short-term

Length of a client's relationship with a broker.

Tip

Advice to buy a particular stock, typically given after the stock has reached the apex of its historical value.

Wall Street

Collective noun for the financial community in lower Manhattan, derived from the wall that early Dutch brokers erected in the seventeenth century to keep out angry, tomahawk-wielding clients. ♦

ISTVAN BANYAI

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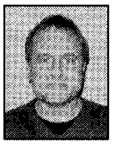

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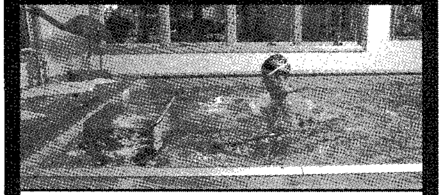

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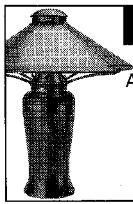

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THE OUTCAST

Conversations with O. J. Simpson.

BY PAT JORDAN

Earlier this year, on three separate occasions, I spent a total of about fifteen hours with O. J. Simpson. I met him through his current attorney, Yale Galanter, who is representing him in an assault case that is scheduled to go to trial this fall, and who has become his "official spokesperson." Simpson now lives in Pinecrest, Florida, a bedroom community fifteen miles south of Miami, on the Atlantic Coast. He moved there in June, 2000, four and a half years after he was acquitted by a Los Angeles jury for the murder of his former wife, Nicole Brown, and her friend Ron Goldman. Simpson was, of course, famous years before the trial, as a professional football player, as a corporate spokesman for the Hertz car-rental company, and as an actor in popular movies, most prominently "Naked Gun" and "Naked Gun 2 1/2." Since Simpson's acquittal in the murder case, his income as an actor and celebrity has greatly diminshed; he now lives on his N.F.L. pension and the returns from his investments. In February, 1997, he was found liable for the deaths of Nicole Brown and Ron Goldman in a civil suit brought by the victims' families, who were awarded $33.5 million in damages. Three years later, probably as a means of sheltering his remaining assets from that judgment, he moved to Florida.

I first met Simpson on a sunny day in late winter. I spent most of the day as a passenger in his car, a black Lincoln Navigator S.U.V. He talked obsessively. As a running back, Simpson used to overcome tacklers with his merciless will. "I let them push me around for three quarters," he said. "They were exhausted by the fourth quarter. I wore them out." He came at me the way he used to come at tacklers, talking from the time we met for breakfast until late that afternoon.

Galanter had directed me not to ask Simpson about Nicole Brown's murder, but Simpson repeatedly brought up the topic. "The press created this guy who was hurting because his wife left him," he said, still spinning his story, seven years after the chase in the white Bronco. "That's bullshit! It was Nicole who wanted to come back to me after the divorce. She stalked me! Trust me. She'd send home cookies with the kids, and once she showed up at my house with a tape of our wedding and began to cry. 'Please, O.J.! I wanna come home!' "

We turned the corner and drove down a residential street. Housewives in spandex shorts were jogging on the sidewalk. Simpson glanced at them and said, "I loved the way Nicole looked. If I saw her on that sidewalk right now, I'd pull over and hit on her. If she had a different head."

Simpson is used to playing the character he created over the years—the genial O.J. we saw in the broadcasting booth, in TV commercials, and in films—and he seemed ill equipped to play a man tormented by tragedy. His features rearranged themselves constantly. His brow furrowed with worry; his eyebrows rose in disbelief; his eyelashes fluttered, suggesting humility; his eyes grew wide with sincerity. All of this was punctuated by an incongruous, almost girlish giggle.

It was Simpson's will, as much as his talent, that enabled him to become not only a great football player but also one of America's most beloved black athletes. ("When I was a kid growing up in San Francisco, Willie Mays was the single biggest influence on my life," Simpson told me. "I saw how he made white people happy. I wanted to be like Willie Mays.") Over the course of his life, Simpson had gotten virtually everything he has wanted—fame, wealth, adulation, Nicole Brown, and, eventually, acquittal. It was widely reported that Nicole told friends that if her husband ever killed her he'd probably "O.J. his way out of it." Today, at fifty-three, almost six years after his acquittal, Simpson seems to be free of doubt, shame, or guilt. He refers to the murders of his wife and Ron Goldman, and his subsequent trials for those murders, as "my ordeal." Now he wants vindication. Only that can erase the stigma that has transformed him from an American hero into a pariah, living out his days in a pathetic mimicry of his former life. And he appears to believe that he will get it, as he got everything—by sheer will—and with it a return to fame and wealth and adulation.

"O.J. Simpson is the most misunderstood person on the planet," Yale Galanter told me some months ago. To remedy this, Galanter said, he has a "grand plan."

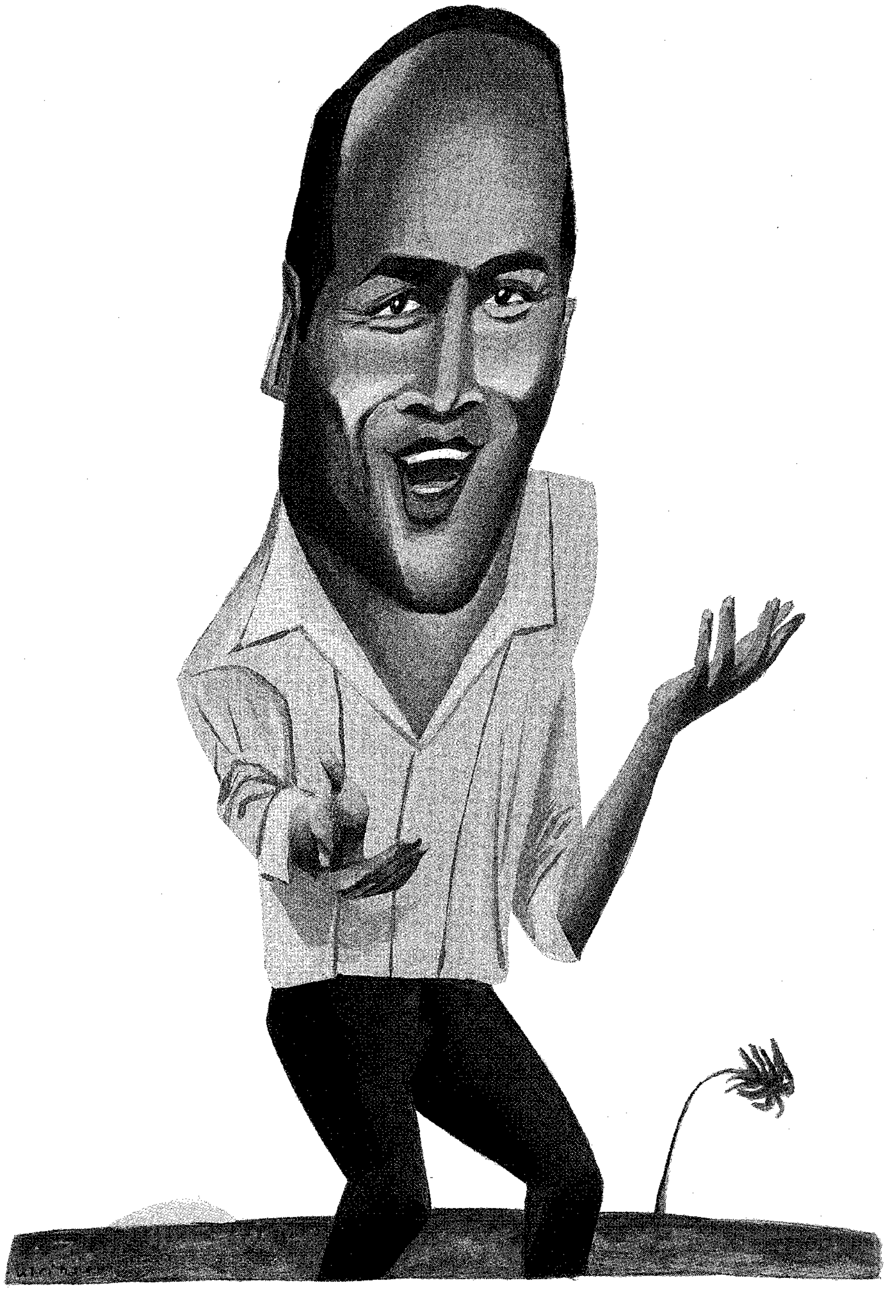
"I want people to get to know the real O.J.," he said. "How giving he is. What a great family man, father, and neighbor he is. I envision a day when O.J. will again be a celebrity spokesman in the mainstream of commerce."

Galanter is a forty-four-year-old Miami-Fort Lauderdale criminal-defense attorney who prides himself on his ability "to take either side of a case." His clients include the former W.W.F. wrestler Terry Szopinski, who was arrested on a drug charge, and Scott Campbell, a motorist whose car allegedly pushed the car of an eighty-three-year-old woman named Tillie Tooter into an Alligator Alley canal.

"But there's celebrity, and then there's O.J.," Galanter said. "O.J. was an American hero. And in a blink of an eye all his champagne-and-caviar dreams were taken away from him. I would like to see him back on top. Americans are very forgiving. They forgave Marv Albert and Frank Gifford. Not that I think O.J. did anything that needs to be forgiven! Personally, I am humbled that O.J. put his trust in me. My parents are walking on cloud nine because O.J. picked me to be his spokesman."

Simpson's civil lawyers recommended that he hire Galanter last December, after he was involved in a "road rage" incident in Kendall, Florida, south of Miami. Simpson was accused of cutting off another driver, confronting him, and ripping off his sunglasses. The resulting felony and misdemeanor charges are scheduled to be heard in the First Circuit Court of Dade County.

Galanter asserts that Simpson is "a terrific father and family man" who drives his children—his daughter, Sydney, fifteen, and his son, Justin, twelve—to and from school each day, and who is in bed by eight o'clock. Be that as it may, Simpson has been constantly in trouble over the past year. In addition to the road-rage arrest, Simpson has been involved in three incidents that required the police's attention. All of them have been tied to Christie Prody, a female friend and companion of Simpson's. Prody, who is twenty-six, is a former "esthetician" (a giver of facials) who is now a waitress. In October, 1999, before Simpson moved from Los Angeles to Florida, he flew to Miami after a panicked long-distance call from Prody. He later called the police from Prody's home and reported that a friend was "loaded out of her mind" on drugs, and driving around. In September, 2000, Prody called the police to report that Simpson had let himself into her home. (Simpson claimed that he had entered Prody's home to do his laundry.) In another incident, the police were called to Miami's Wyndham Hotel to quell a distur-



"The public shows me so much love. Women are my biggest defenders," Simpson says.

MARK ULRIKSEN

bance. The management ended up asking Prody to leave the hotel, reportedly for physically assaulting "the victim," O. J. Simpson. The previous fall, Prody had sold a story to the *National Enquirer* for fifty thousand dollars, in which she divulged what she described as details of her five-year relationship with Simpson, including two abortions, Simpson's obsession with Nicole's murder, and numerous public brawls, which Prody told me had been fuelled by cocaine binges.

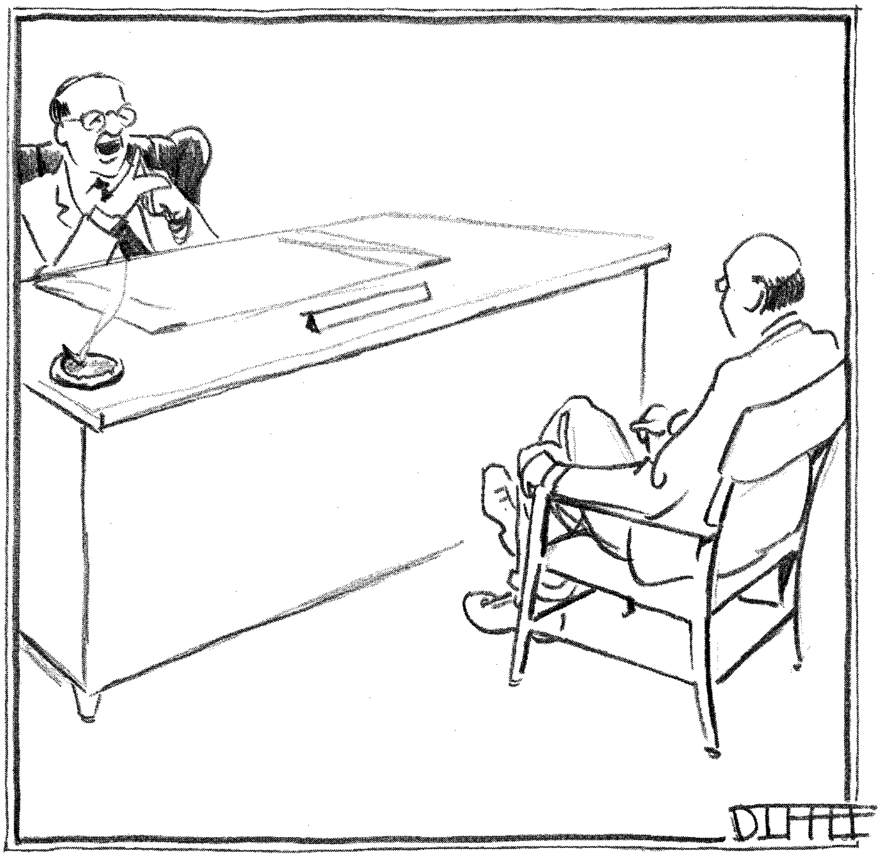
All this may explain why Galanter is desperate to control what the media writes about his client, who, he insists, is a victim of his own celebrity. "Everything that happens to O.J. is news, and everything the media writes is inaccurate," Galanter said. "You'll see. You'll love him."

At seven-thirty in the morning, Simpson hobbled into the Kendall branch of the Wild Oats Supermarket, an organic-health-food store and juice bar. He has bad knees, the result of arthritis and his years in the N.F.L. He wore a gray shirt and black slacks. He sat down, smiling, and ordered what he said was his morning drink, leafy green vegetables and garlic, which reminded him of the time he had to hug Leslie Uggams, who was taking garlic pills—"all that garlic on her breath," he said, grinning. "But it helps my arthritis, so I can play golf again. Although I didn't play much golf when I moved to South Florida, eight months ago, because I didn't want to leave the kids alone."

Yale Galanter arrived and sat down with us. He was dressed in a blue oxford shirt, gray slacks, and black loafers. He is a good-looking man, with short brown hair and a chiselled profile.

"I love L.A.," Simpson said. "L.A. is my home. It's still the best place to be—the weather, the golf, my friends. I had a nice life in L.A., even after my ordeal."

His life in Los Angeles was not without incident, however. "Once someone keyed my car," Simpson said. "But when I was incarcerated I read the Koran, which said everyone goes through some ordeal, everyone's persecuted and overcomes it. I still had friends who wanted me to play golf at the Riviera Country Club, but I didn't want to bring any controversy there. One time, on another course, a helicopter followed us on the fairway and I hid under a tree. And another time this big ol' guy calls out to me, 'You're a murderer!' I said, 'You've got a right to your opinion.' He said, 'You better watch out, there are snipers on this course.' I said, 'I hope they can't shoot straight.' Then he calls me an asshole, and I threw my clubs down and came up on him fast, looking for leverage so I can fuck him up a little bit, my face real close to his, spittin' in his face while I'm sayin' to him, 'You call me a fuckin' murderer, I got to live with that, but "asshole"—come on, let's get it on.' He backs down. And now I'm a hero to all the little old ladies on the course, who thought I handled it great."



"So, Jim, where do you see yourself in ten minutes?"

After Simpson finished, we went to the checkout line and I paid for his drink.

"Thanks," he said, laughing. "I ain't got any money anymore."

We got in the Navigator and Simpson drove to Roasters N' Toasters, a deli in a strip mall just across the street. "I like to eat breakfast here, hanging out with judges and lawyers," he said.

The deli was crowded and noisy with people talking and the clatter of dishes. As we walked to our table, they looked up, went silent, then turned away. After we ordered, Simpson sat against the wall and looked around the crowded dining room. "I never sit with my back to the room," he said.

The waitress brought our food and we began eating. Simpson ate hunched over, his face low to the plate, looking up expectantly from time to time.

"I didn't picture my life like this," he told me. "I thought I'd retire at fifty with enough money, on my own terms. It's hard to retire this way. But I did it for my kids."

"O.J. is a devoted single parent," Galanter said.

"As a father, I was just a disciplinarian before, and now I'm everything to my kids. People ask me what's the hardest thing for me, and I tell them I was always a great dad but I'm a horrible mom. I don't cook. . . . A man's natural instinct is to solve problems. Like when Jason said Sydney did a lot of things and I never caught her. I said, 'That's one of the reasons why I love her. She's smart enough not to get caught.' She's her mom all over again, she's got those German genes—her grandmother, my wife, now my daughter. Those bitches'll wear you out."

Simpson said that he likes South Florida because "everyone's got a history here." He meant a history they were trying to escape: that people come to South Florida to create a new life. He added, laughing, "They got funny laws in this state." He was referring to two state laws, the bankruptcy and head-of-household laws. The former says that one's home can't be taken to pay off debts. The latter prevents creditors from garnisheeing the wages of any head of household; Simpson, as the father of two children, counts as a head of household. This is convenient for him, given the judgment levied against him in his civil trial.

"It's a bonus I didn't expect. I don't have to turn over anything to the Goldmans. They have to find out and get a court order for me to send them money. It's a cat-and-mouse game."

Pedro, the deli's cook, sat down with us. "I seen you come in, Juice," he said. He was a burly, unshaven man wearing a Yankees cap. "Me and Juice are good buddies," he said to me. "Juice had Christmas Eve dinner with my family."

Most of Simpson's friends here are what some celebrities might call "the little people." He plays golf on public courses. It doesn't seem to bother him that he has lost his celebrity friends, like Marcus Allen, as long as he has someone to listen to his monologues and jokes. The basic structure of his life—golf, restaurants, women—hasn't changed much.

A woman in her seventies stopped by our table. She had a bouffant of lacquered, pinkish-blond hair and wore heavy makeup and gaudy jewelry.

"I just wanted to say I wish everyone would leave you alone," the woman said in a faint, unplaceable European accent.

"Well, thank you," Simpson said, grinning. The woman held out her arms. Simpson stood up and hugged her over our table.

"Can I get your autograph?" she said.

"Certainly." The woman handed him her card. There was a photograph on it of a much younger woman with the name Rossette. Simpson signed her card and handed it back.

Simpson sat down and said, "I never got hugs before. Now the public shows me so much love. Women are my biggest defenders. It's that bad-boy syndrome. Now girls chase me. But if a girl wants to be with me I tell them they have to be No. 3, behind my kids."

"Being a father comes first with O.J.," Galanter said.

"I mean, I like gorgeous girls, but I can't walk around naked around my house or jump in the pool with a friend, because of my kids."

"When you say the name 'O.J.,' " Galanter said, "a lot of words come to mind, but not 'family man.' "

We drove south, toward Mount Sinai Medical Center, where Simpson was scheduled to visit some patients. According to Galanter, he does this in his spare time.

At Mount Sinai, we met with Pat Stauber, a registered nurse and a licensed clinical social worker. Pat is tall, slim, and attractive, with straight black hair and an earnest demeanor. She led us down the hall to a hospital room, and stopped at an open door.

"This is all I could arrange on such short notice," she said to Galanter. "I wanted O.J. to visit this man coming out of a coma, but I couldn't arrange it."

"When I played in Buffalo," Simpson said, "I used to visit these kids with inoperable cancer. The newspaper ran stories all the time about the kids I visited before they died. Then I had to visit another kid with cancer who was a huge O.J. fan. The minute I arrived, the kid flipped out. He said, 'If O.J.'s here, I must be dying.' That blew me outta the water."

Simpson went into the room and spoke to an old man in a wheelchair with a breathing tube in his mouth. He sat on the man's bed and talked softly to him while they watched a golf match on TV. Simpson pointed to the screen and tapped the man on the shoulder. The old man just nodded as Simpson talked.

When Simpson came out of the room, a half hour later, he said, "The guy was totally alert, he just couldn't talk, so I talked about sports."

Pat said, "Thanks," and gave Simpson a hug.

Simpson said, "Like I got anything else to do."

Simpson, Galanter, and I drove to the Calusa Country Club, a public course, in Kendall. "I told ya, now I get hugs," Simpson said. "At the Holyfield fight in Vegas I got all the play." He grinned. "The tabloids were saying I was the reigning King of Porn. That I had sex with two girls four times each in two and a half hours. If I could do that I'd be in a porn film! A guy fifty-three. But I ain't need no Viagra yet. Thank God it's still there." Then, flashing his O.J. grin, he repeated an old joke. "I met this girl once and she tells me she only dates guys with ten inches. I said, 'Baby, I ain't cuttin' off two inches for no one.' "

Simpson parked his Navigator in the nearly deserted parking lot of the golf course. Two men came out of the clubhouse and met us by the golf carts. Simpson introduced me to Stephen Lee, a music distributor from Jamaica, and Delvon Campbell, also from Jamaica, formerly a steward in a Miami airport lounge.

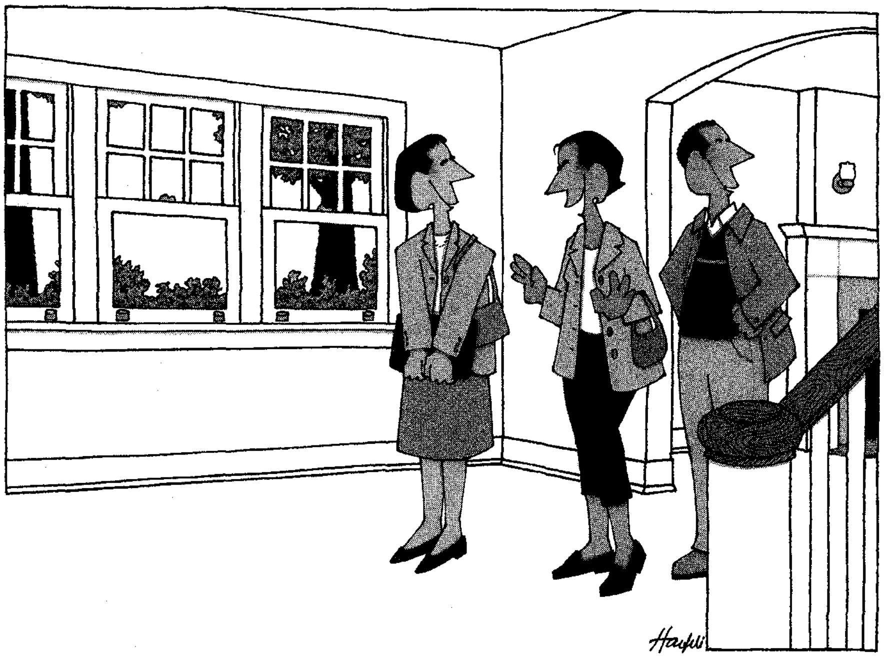
"Hi, mon, how ye be doin'?" Delvon said to Simpson.

Simpson laughed and shook his head. "I have no idea what Delvon is saying."

"O.J., he's been a friend a mine since I met him at a golf tournament in the Bahamas seven years ago," Delvon said. We were in a golf cart following Galanter and Simpson to the first tee. Simpson lined up his drive. He hunched over, biting his lower lip, and began his backswing. His knees buckled and he lunged at the ball with his driver. The ball bounced up the fairway about a hundred and fifty yards. Galanter and Lee teed off next. The rough along the fairway was barren of trees and exposed to the afternoon sun, and the fairway itself was full of dirt and clumps of dried grass.

The foursome played in silence. Although Simpson had told me that golf is his "passion," this particular round, at least, seemed joyless. At the sixth hole, Simpson's game began to improve, just as storm clouds moved in.

"It looks like rain, mon," Delvon



"Of course, we'd 'This Old House' it."

• •

called from our cart as Simpson prepared to tee off. "We best be gettin' back to the clubhouse."

"I'm weak, I'm crippled, and I'm old," Simpson said. "But I'm getting my game back now. I ain't going nowhere."

Delvon turned our cart around and we motored toward the clubhouse. I looked back over my shoulder and saw Simpson bent over in the rain, lining up his next shot.

A few minutes later, Simpson, Galanter, and Lee, all dripping wet, came into the clubhouse. "You should've stayed out there," Simpson said to me. "I had my best hole."

The bar and dining room of the Calusa Country Club were quiet, except for a table of older women having lunch by the window, a bartender polishing glasses, and the club pro drinking a Coke at the bar.

Galanter's cell phone rang and he answered it. A friend of his was in Los Angeles and needed to know about restaurants. "Here, let me put O.J. on," Galanter said.

Simpson took the phone and said, "You wanna go to the Ivy at the Shore, or maybe Chinois, or Schwarzenegger's place, Schatzi." He listened, then said, "It's like Laguna Beach. That's where my wife grew up. Nicole." He hung up.

"O.J., did you see Johnnie when he came to Florida the other day?" Galanter said.

"No," Simpson said.

Johnnie Cochran, Simpson's former lawyer, was now representing a fourteen-year-old black boy from South Florida, Lionel Tate, who is serving a life sentence for the first-degree murder of a six-year-old black girl.

"I wish Johnnie would just focus on the life sentence and not make it a racial thing," Simpson said.

A woman was reading the news on CNN on the overhead television when our food came. Simpson looked up at her and said, "Man, she got old quick. When you think the last time that woman got laid?" He shook his head. "Who knows? You never know in this world what rings your bell. Now, that Heather Graham girl is fine. And that Jennifer Love Hewitt—that girl got booty for days."

The CNN reporter was now reading a story about the breakup of Meg Ryan and Russell Crowe. Simpson watched until the report was over. Then he said, "You think if Crowe and Quaid"—Dennis Quaid, Ryan's estranged husband—"ever met they'd fight?" He shook his head. "As a man, you gotta punch the guy that fucked your wife."

It was late afternoon, and Simpson was driving again.

"For the last few years, I wasn't really looking for work," he said. "I got an offer to be a TV spokesman in Europe, an 'Inside Edition'-type thing, but I'd have to be there eight days a month, and I can't leave my kids."

"O.J. is a wonderful father," Galanter said from the back seat.

"Now I'm gettin' active again. I got Galanter to help me. This is the first time I'm really ready to take advantage of offers. Yesterday, a guy wanted me to be the director of a youth program. A year ago, I'd have said, 'In the future.' But basically the future's here."

I asked him if he ever gets depressed. "I'm not prone to get depressed," he said, "but sometimes . . . the weight on me reaches a point and I just wanna go home and—" His cell phone rang. He answered it and listened for a moment. Then he said, "I ain't no advice for the lovelorn," and hung up. "Christie," he said.

"Your girlfriend?"

Simpson gave me a pained look. "Aw, man, she ain't my girlfriend. She's just, you know . . ." He made a thrusting motion with his hips. "Find me a girl owns a golf course and will pay all my bills and I'm pretty sure I'll marry her."

Later, I spoke to Cathy Bellmore, Christie Prody's mother, who told me, "O.J. wanted to get rid of her when she lived in L.A., so she went to Florida a year ago without him." Once she was gone, Simpson wanted her back. Apparently, Simpson was unable to give up even a girlfriend he was bored with, because he considered her his private property. A friend of Simpson's discounted any threat to Prody's life, saying, "O.J. was really in love with Nicole, but he doesn't care enough about Christie to kill her."

A few weeks after my first meeting with Simpson, my wife and I had dinner with him and Prody at the Palm, a steak house in North Miami Beach. Galanter and his wife, Elyse, arrived a few minutes after we did. While we waited for Simpson, Galanter leaned over and told me that Christie liked to stay out late. "Wait'll you see her," he said. "If you or I ever walked into a restaurant with her, our stock would go up."

Simpson and Christie arrived late. Christie is an attractive woman with the rounded features of a tomboy. She has lank, reddish hair that she once dyed blond because, as Simpson put it, "what woman doesn't want to be a blonde at one time?" Even as a blonde, however, Christie is not, as the tabloids would have it, a "Nicole look-alike."

Simpson apologized for being late. He looked at the three women, who were talking, to make sure they weren't watching him, then he grinned and made a thrusting gesture with his hips.

Christie said she and Simpson had met when she was nineteen, when she'd moved to Los Angeles after attending the University of Minnesota. This was shortly after Simpson's trial. One day, on a lark, she drove by Simpson's house, on Rockingham. "Like everybody else, I thought he did it," she said. She saw Simpson outside riding an electric bicycle and called to him, "Hi, O.J.!" He came over and they talked for hours. She gave him her telephone number, and the next day he called and invited her to the house. They have been together, on and off, ever since.

"He was charming and charismatic, and kind of intriguing," she said. "I always liked older guys. I got enough problems myself, so why hang out with young people? O.J. forgets I have a typical twenty-six-year-old's problems. I have my whole life ahead of me. But I live for today and don't worry so much about five years from now." She laughed. "I might not be here."

We were seated at a round table in the far corner of the dining room, barely noticed by the other diners. Simpson began to tell a story about when he was a teenager, and everyone fell silent.

"I smoked dope with this white chick I was trying to make it with, and then after we smoked I thought, I'll never become an athlete now, so I ran all the way home to get the pot out of my system." Then he began another story.

I asked Christie what attracted her to Simpson.

Christie glanced nervously at Simpson. Then she turned back to me and said, "I'm mature for my age, and he's an immature older guy who likes to play golf. That's a game for retired guys who want to escape reality." She looked at Simpson, who was talking. "O.J.'s into denial. He loved L.A. I hated L.A. It corrupts your soul. I loved growing up in Minnesota."

Simpson stopped talking and glared at her. "Yeah, that's why you couldn't wait to leave." He turned toward me, grinning lasciviously, and said, "You're into Christie, huh?" He raised his eyebrows. "Did you ever fool around on your wife? Everybody fools around and lies about it. Everyone lies. Look at Clinton. Deny, deny, deny."

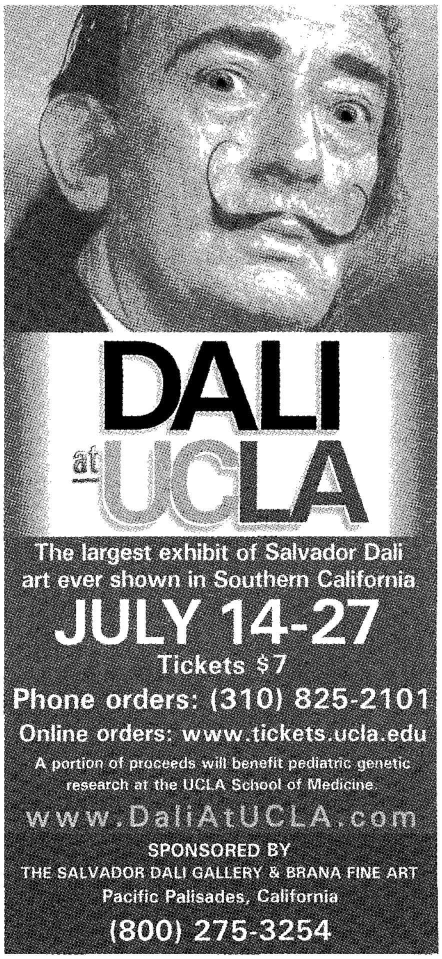
Christie didn't speak again for the rest of the evening.

A few days later, on the telephone, Christie said, "I'm sorry. I was very uncomfortable. O.J. told me to watch what I say with a writer." She paused. "O.J. feels he has to construct these elaborate lies. He tells me he went to the doctor when he was really playing golf. Why bother? I don't care if he plays golf."

She told me that she no longer believed that Simpson murdered his wife, but she did stand by everything she had said about him in her *National Enquirer* exposé. "I was angry," she said. "I had given up my life for him and had nothing to show for it. He told me there was no room in his life for a wife, or more kids. I want kids. And then someone offered me fifty thousand dollars to tell the truth. So I did it. I don't deny my drug use, or anything I said in it."

On the first day I spent with Simpson, he drove me back to my car late in the afternoon. "The thing I'm most proud of," he said, "is that the girls I dated were offered two hundred and fifty thousand dollars by the tabloids and not one single one of them said anything bad about me. . . . I expected the cops to lie. They were told not to investigate the case because no one in L.A. wanted to hear it. . . . And the media. They let me down the most. They got lazy and relied on police tips instead of investigating. During my trial, the truth was known, but no one would write it. It's a much better story if I'm guilty. They didn't look at anybody but me. I was set up."

Simpson stopped his Navigator at a red light across the street from the Wild Oats parking lot, where I'd left my car. He said, "I wonder if I've run into this person who killed Nicole. Have I talked to them? Do I see them every day?" ♦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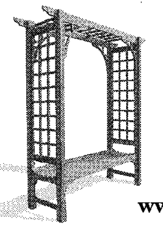
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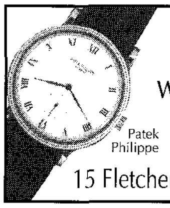
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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

THE PRICE OF OIL

What was Mobil up to in Kazakhstan and Russia?

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

In the fall of 1997, an international businessman named Farhat Tabbah filed suit in London against three American businessmen, the oil minister of Kazakhstan, and a subsidiary of the Mobil Corporation. He charged that they had cheated him out of millions of dollars in commissions on what was to have been a ten-year swap of oil between Kazakhstan and Iran. Mobil and the other defendants denied the allegations and successfully moved to suppress all Tabbah's affidavits and supporting documentation. A few months after Tabbah filed his lawsuit, he flew to the United States and gave his account of the swap plan to federal authorities. He also turned over several file drawers of documents, including internal Mobil faxes and memos, to agents of the United States Customs Service.

Mobil conducted an investigation into its own actions and its potential liabilities. (American oil companies are forbidden by federal sanctions law from trading with Iran or facilitating such trades without a license from the Treasury Department.) That investigation, which lasted more than a year and was assisted by Patton Boggs, a Washington law firm, found evidence that J. Bryan Williams III, a senior executive in charge of many of the company's overseas crude-oil transactions, may have facilitated the planned Iranian oil swap. Williams was one of the three businessmen named in Tabbah's suit. Mobil's senior management, however, then in the process of negotiating a merger with Exxon, concluded that there was no need to report this evidence to the Securities and Exchange Commission or to stockholders. Bryan Williams retired quietly in early 1998, at the age of fifty-eight, and, the next year, Mobil and Exxon merged to form ExxonMobil, the world's largest and most powerful publicly traded oil company.

Mobil investigators also uncovered an array of unseemly business dealings that took place in Russia and Kazakhstan in the mid-nineties. More than a billion dollars of Mobil's cash was paid to Russian companies in unorthodox transactions; questionable accounting practices were followed; and multimillion-dollar transfers were made that, as a Patton Boggs report put it in one case, "did not have any apparent valid business purpose." The investigators' working papers and summary reports, many of which were obtained for this article, suggest that Mobil's activities in Russia and Kazakhstan were not driven entirely by a desire for quick profit. The company also had a strategic goal: access to Kazakhstan's rich Tengiz oil field.

Tabbah's court papers and the internal Mobil documents gathered for this account provide an unparalleled view of a major American oil company's dealings in the former Soviet Union. They raise questions about the company's decisions to enter deals that ultimately benefitted powerful figures in the region, including President Nursultan Nazarbayev, of Kazakhstan, and former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, of Russia.

A federal grand jury in Washington has been hearing evidence on the swap allegations, along with allegations of money laundering and bribery, since last year. Before a second grand jury, in New York, Mobil and other American oil companies that do business in Kazakhstan were being questioned about possible violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Under the F.C.P.A., which was passed in 1977, it is unlawful for any American to bribe foreign officials, either directly or through an agent, "for the purpose of obtaining or retaining business."

ExxonMobil has refused to permit any of its employees to be interviewed for this account, and has asked former Mobil employees not to coöperate. The company has stated that it was not involved in the swap, did not own any of the oil that was swapped, and did not authorize any employees to participate in the planning and execution of the swap. Bryan Williams refused to be interviewed, but, in a written statement, he denied any involvement in the swap. Williams also declared that Mobil had approved all the deals and contracts he worked on. When *The New Yorker* sent details of the allegations to ExxonMobil for comment, an outside attorney, Martin London, responded on the company's behalf, stating that many of the allegations were "erroneous," and that "the broad theme of your attack on Mobil's business integrity is both incorrect and actionable." It would be "inappropriate" for ExxonMobil to discuss the allegations specifically, London wrote, because "there are ongoing grand-jury investigations relating to the matters addressed in your letter."

The oil industry has long used swapping as a way to reduce the cost of transporting crude oil, by pipeline or other means, to refineries. The arrangement also provides a way to get oil from remote oil fields and isolated nations, such as Kazakhstan, to market. In a swap, the title to oil in one location is transferred to oil of an equivalent value that may be hundreds, or even thousands, of miles away. Because of the potential for abuse in such complicated transactions, major oil companies carefully monitor and record their swaps.

"It's extremely rare for a legitimate company to play pricing games in a transfer," said Thomas Stauffer, a retired economics professor at Harvard and Georgetown who specializes in oil and taxation issues. "But in the Third World—and especially in places like Kazakhstan—it's an invitation to corruption. You can hide a lot of sins in an oil swap. Title to oil in any tanker might

GUY BILLOUT

At stake was the company's access to the Tengiz field, one of the most important oil discoveries of the last thirty years.

change a dozen times before it gets to port." Such sins include oil laundering—concealing an illegal source of oil—and sanctions busting. "Oil is oil," Stauffer said. "It can be sold in any given market at any time." Men like Marc Rich, the fugitive financier who was pardoned by President Clinton in January, have earned hundreds of millions of dollars over the years by brokering oil deals with pariah nations such as Iran and the former regime in South Africa.

In Mobil's case, the company's in-house investigators came to believe that the proposed swap between Kazakhstan and Iran was but one element in a complex of seemingly high-risk business deals that were devised by Bryan Williams. The investigation also led to the two other Americans named in Tabbah's suit: James H. Giffen, a New York merchant banker and adviser to Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev; and Friedhelm Eronat, a businessman who often acted on behalf of Mobil overseas. The business dealings and friendships among the three men date back many years, and they have done billions of dollars' worth of deals worldwide. The three might never have become the focus of grand-jury scrutiny if they hadn't fallen out with Farhat Tabbah.

APRIL ORCHARD

We think if we're not conscious we exist
we won't exist, but
how can that be?
Just look at the sun.
Oh, if only I could make myself
completely unafraid—once
born, we never die—
what talks we'd have, and will. It's theorized
the universe is only one
among others, infinite
others. Though
didn't Christ tell us, In my father's house
there are many rooms . . .
And I would tell you
what it's like,
real fear. And
how there are human beings for whom the sun
is never going to shine
is never going to rise again, ever, not
really—
not the real sun.
They're not exactly waking up
in radiant awareness
and celebration of their own presence these days,
who'd get rid of themselves with no more thought
(if it were possible) than you would give to
taking off a glove.
How in deep sleep sometimes even we get well.
So you can believe me, in the far deeper
sleep (these new apple leaves, maybe) we are all going
to be perfectly all right.

—*Franz Wright*

I—GETTING IN

Kazakhstan and the other former Soviet Republics in the Caspian Sea region (Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan) have become notorious for exploitation, corruption, and seemingly bottomless fields of oil whose bounty seldom benefits the average citizen. Almaty, the business capital of Kazakhstan, still has the stolid look, the unemployment, and the pollution of the Soviet days, despite a decade of increasing oil and gas production. Close to the Presidential palace, however, two new luxury hotels have been built for the foreign businessmen drawn by the country's natural resources.

The Tengiz oil field is one of the most important finds since Alaska's Prudhoe Bay, in 1968. The Soviets tried to develop it in the nineteen-eighties, but instead triggered a gigantic blowout and a fire that burned for a year, with a column of flame six hundred feet high. Tengiz was not put into systematic production until the early nineteen-nineties, when newly independent Kazakhstan sold a half interest in the field to Chevron, the American oil company. Tengiz's output has steadily expanded since then. "It's a geologist's dream—the sort of field you see once in a generation," Edward C. Chow, a retired Chevron executive, said. "It's a mother of an oil field, and we still don't know how much oil is in it."

Bryan Williams turned out to be crucial to Mobil's efforts to get into Tengiz. As executive vice-president of Mobil Sales and Supply, he bought crude oil from oil companies controlled by foreign governments. A lawyer turned oil man, Williams had graduated from the University of North Carolina and New York University Law School and spent several years at Shearman & Sterling, a prominent New York firm. In the early nineteen-seventies, he joined Mobil. His first major assignment was in Saudi Arabia, where Lucio A. Noto, who later became Mobil's C.E.O., was in charge of company operations.

At Mobil, Williams was respected by his peers for his ability, his panache, and his daring. One retired Mobil senior executive said he was widely known as a "cowboy"—a high-flier in a high-flying business. International spot-market crude-oil prices are extremely volatile—the price of oil varies constantly from country to country—and narrow profit margins can change within minutes, necessitating snap judgments. It was accepted at Mobil that successful oilmen like Williams needed autonomy, with no second-guessing, as they routinely committed millions in the hunt for profits. Williams repaid the trust with smart deals.

He consistently produced high profits, former Mobil officials told me, and eventually became a favorite of Noto. "Noto and Bryan were close," Don Voelte, a former vice-president who left Mobil in 1997, recalled. Although Williams reported not directly to Noto but to the head of sales at Mobil headquarters, Voelte said that "Bryan was the go-to guy in the international trading area." Noto would "always chastise other Mobil folks, saying, 'Just go to Bryan. He knows how to handle these things.'" Another Mobil insider tells of a high-level meeting at which Noto singled out Williams as "the only entrepreneur in the whole business."

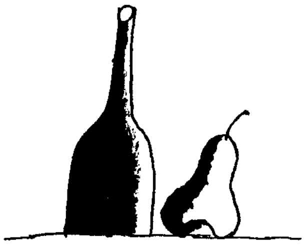
To get into Tengiz, Mobil needed the help of James Giffen, who represented the Kazakh government. (Giffen was identified in press reports last summer as a target of a federal investigation into corruption and money laundering.) Giffen grew up in Stockton, California, where his father ran a men's-clothing store. He graduated from the U.C.L.A. law school in 1965 and spent eleven years with the Armco Steel Corporation, which struggled during the Cold War to gain export approval for the sale of oil-drilling equipment and steel goods to the Soviet Union. In the mid-eighties, Giffen set up a banking company called Mercator, based in New York City. He was brash, intelligent, and eager to make money. "I never had any evidence that he was anything more than a smart operator," Jack F. Matlock, Jr., who was the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1987 to 1991, recalled. "He was always working for No. 1—Jim Giffen. But I could understand that. I didn't detect anything irregular."

Giffen spent years cultivating senior officials of the Communist Party, such as Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was the Party's rising star in Kazakhstan. In the late eighties, Nazarbayev, a former steel worker and engineer, became First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party. After the Soviet collapse, in 1991, he won the Presidency of the country. Giffen then became an important Presidential adviser.

Nazarbayev's regime was quick to coöperate with the first Bush Administration's plans to denuclearize the breakaway Soviet republics; more than a thousand warheads that had been deployed by the Kremlin in Kazakhstan at the height of the Cold War were sent back to Russia, without incident. The Clinton Administration's initial approach was to emphasize the building of democratic institutions—a largely futile effort—but it soon turned to security issues, such as reducing drug trafficking. Diplomacy concentrated for the most part on providing opportunities for American oil companies seeking to do business in Kazakhstan, and on plans to build pipelines that would allow the new republics to deliver their oil and natural gas directly to the West by way of a Black Sea port in Turkey, thus bypassing both Russia, to the north, and Iran, to the south.

American intelligence officials say that Nazarbayev has misappropriated hundreds of millions of dollars. He has also shared generously the perquisites of his office (as he defined them) with his immediate family. His eldest daughter, Dariga, controls the national television network, and a son-in-law is the president of a state oil-and-gas pipeline. The country has not prospered under Nazarbayev's rule. Social conditions have deteriorated steadily; per-capita G.N.P. is just thirteen hundred dollars a year. The nation is also burdened with an external debt of more than eight billion dollars, and with a huge and rapidly growing level of capital flight: a fifth of the country's total money supply is now stashed in Swiss banks. Nonetheless, Nazarbayev has been viewed by many in Washington not as a despot but as a charismatic political leader who could hold his nation together.

According to William Courtney, who was the first American Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev became "more authoritarian as his power grew, and came to depend on Jim Giffen more and more." By 1995, Courtney says, "Nazarbayev had inserted Giffen as an indispensable go-between for some key projects."



In the late nineteen-eighties, Giffen had helped Chevron buy into the Tengiz field. But a new president of Chevron's overseas division, Richard Matzke, decided not to deal further with Giffen, and Chevron's relationships inside Kazakhstan quickly soured. Matzke is said to have proudly told one colleague that his company "didn't pay a nickel" in middlemen's fees after getting into Tengiz. However, Giffen subsequently demanded a "success" fee and received it—seven and a half cents per barrel of Chevron's share of the Tengiz oil. It earned him millions of dollars in royalties—at least three million last year alone.

More and more, Kazakhstan insiders told me, Giffen's power became tied to his ability to help Nazarbayev and his government cronies, including Nurlan Balgymbayev, the oil-and-gas minister, benefit from the oil business. Balgymbayev, who was named as a defendant in Tabbah's suit, began his career, in the nineteen-seventies, as an engineer in the Soviet oil fields. He became friendly in those years with Viktor Chernomyrdin and the other men who created Gazprom, the powerful Russian energy consortium. In 1994, after an unhappy year with Chevron, Balgymbayev was appointed Kazakhstan's oil-and-gas minister. He routinely told foreign oil companies seeking to do business in Kazakhstan that any prospective deal had to involve Giffen and Mercator, which had offices there.

Dan White, a former ARCO executive, said that when, in late 1995, he arrived to open an ARCO office in the former Soviet Union a senior American diplomat in Kazakhstan told him, "The best way to get what you want is to see Giffen." One afternoon, White happened to encounter the Kazakh oil minister in a hotel lobby. They exchanged a few pleasantries, and then Balgymbayev raced off to the airport. At that moment, White recalled, "the fellow next to him says, 'I'm Jim Giffen,'" and told him, "Dan, nobody gets to Balgymbayev without coming through me." Giffen paused, White told me, and said, "You know, this is a strange place here. A lot of people carry guns, and bad things happen to people."

Giffen's ties to President Nazarbayev

are not limited to the oil business. He now advises Kazakhstan on economic planning, investments, health care, and education. Yet he has been careful, over the years, to maintain contact with the C.I.A., the F.B.I., and various American officials. "He saw a fair amount of us and always debriefed us," Ambassador Courtney said. "My personal take is that Jim was trying to be a law-abiding middleman. I encouraged him to register as a foreign agent"—with the Justice Department, as Americans acting on behalf of foreign governments are generally required to do—"but he wanted to stay away from that." (Giffen denies that the conversations with White and with the Ambassador took place.)

II—GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT

Cash from Mobil began flowing into the former Soviet Union in the early nineties, at a time when the region was burdened with enormous debt and rampant corruption; it was not an easy time for foreign businessmen. Mobil's early goal was to establish contacts and find out what it took to do business in Russia and other former Soviet states. One immediate realization was that men like James Giffen, with their connections, could make the difference between success and failure.

Mobil began negotiating the purchase of a stake in the Tengiz field in 1995. The middleman in the deal was Giffen. When I asked a former Mobil executive why the company chose to work with Giffen, he told me, "Giffen was a promoter. He brought investors in. He took the risks. He was agile and nimble, and had a small company with tremendous capitalization when needed. He was his own man, well positioned to bring people to the table."

In the fall of 1995, Lucio Noto, by then Mobil's C.E.O., and a few senior executives flew Giffen and President Nazarbayev on a company jet to a resort in Nassau, in the Bahamas, to discuss what Mobil needed to do to get into Tengiz. One of the Mobil executives at the meeting told me that, while on the island, he and his colleagues joked about how upset Chevron's Richard Matzke must have been upon learning that his company might have to share Tengiz with another American company. "Matzke's anger added to the pleasure," the executive said, with a laugh.

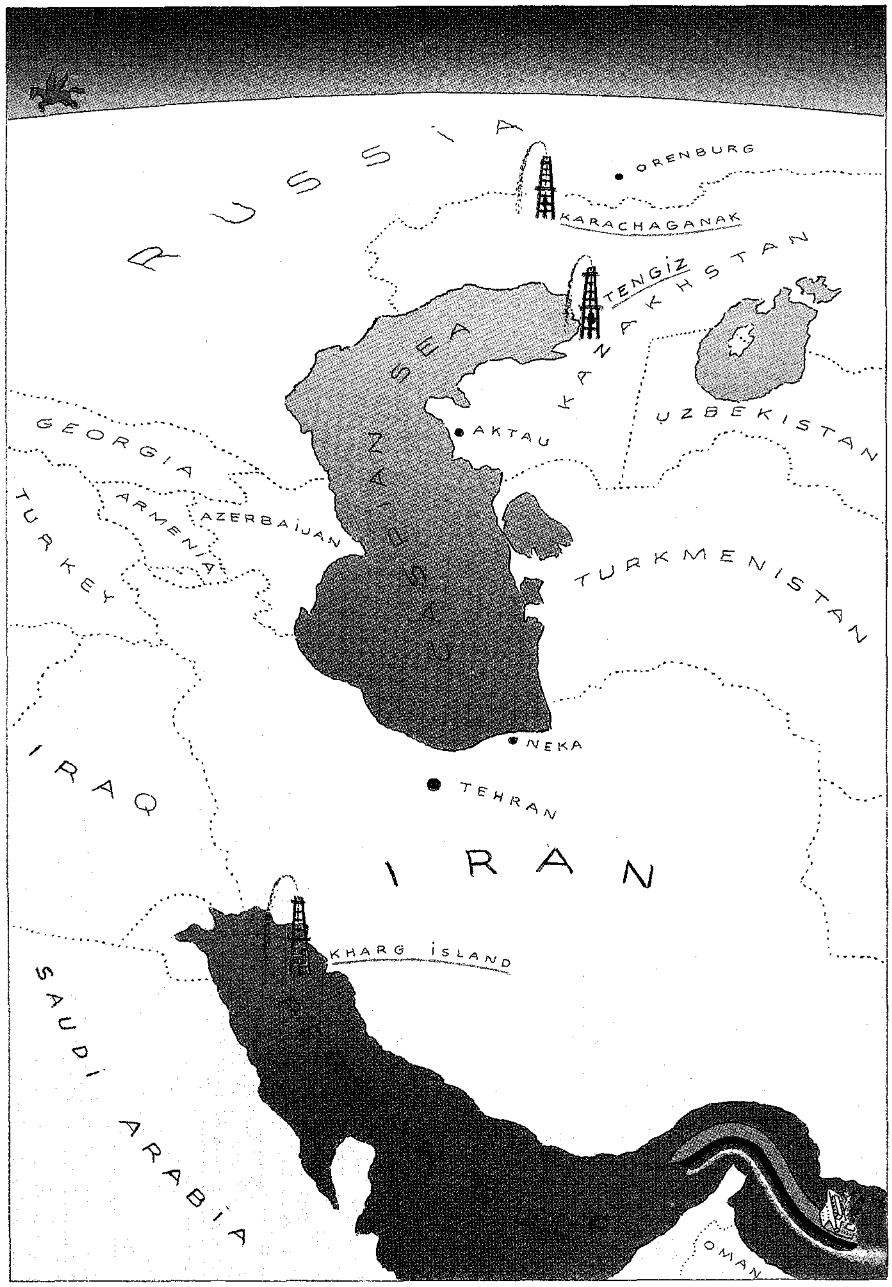
A Mobil employee who took part in the discussions in Nassau said that the Kazakhs made a series of extraordinary demands, seeking, among other things, a new Gulfstream jet aircraft for Nazarbayev, funds for tennis courts at his home, and four trucks with satellite dishes to be used by his daughter's television network. Don Voelte, who became involved in the Tengiz negotiations in early 1996, confirmed that Nazarbayev had asked for the airplane. "We said absolutely no way," Voelte said. It is not known how Mobil reacted to the other requests. (In a statement for this article, a Mobil spokesman said that the Tengiz purchase was "subject to extensive review . . . with regard to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act," and that the company was "not then and is not now aware of any illegal payments.")

Demands for tennis courts were part of the shabby routine of doing business in the former Soviet Union. President Nazarbayev's real problem was obtaining Russia's good will, and that of Viktor Chernomyrdin, who has been cited by American intelligence agencies as being responsible for the diversion of many millions of dollars in state money. Despite a modest government salary, Chernomyrdin is a billionaire today—one of the ten wealthiest men in Russia. He had been the oil-and-gas minister in the Soviet era, and he made the transition to capitalism as the mastermind of Gazprom. In 1992, he became President Boris Yeltsin's Prime Minister, but he continued to maintain an active interest in oil. He controlled Russia's pipeline system, and, since all pipelines out of Kazakhstan went through Russia, he was able to keep the Kazakhs dependent on him by putting limits on the amount of oil that they could pipe out, by setting high tariffs, and by siphoning off a percentage of the oil into the Russian domestic market. Any effort by Mobil to buy into the Tengiz field would require his blessing.

In 1995, Bryan Williams set in motion a confounding business deal involving Kazakhstan and Russia. Its overriding result seemed to be to benefit—at Mobil's expense—Viktor Chernomyrdin. At the center of the deal was a project to transport liquid condensate (a natural-gas by-product) by pipeline from Kazakhstan's Karachaganak field, near the Russian border, to processing plants in and around Orenburg, a town in southern Russia, just over the border from Kazakhstan. Earlier in his career, Chernomyrdin had been an engineer and the director of one of the Orenburg plants. After the collapse of Communism, in 1991, he and his family obtained a controlling interest in the plant. By the mid-nineteen-nineties, the aging plant, which was dependent on outside suppliers for raw materials, was barely functioning. Mobil, through Williams, came to the rescue. It did so with the help of Friedhelm Eronat.

As a businessman and oil trader, Eronat has managed to amass a substantial fortune—he recently bought a four-and-a-half-million-dollar home in London's Carlyle Square—while keeping a low profile. Those who know him describe him as tall, well-spoken, and personable, with striking jet-black hair. He loves to talk about the oil business. "He's a *kommersant*," one oilman told me, using the Russian word for a businessman. Eronat's personal history is unclear. He was born in 1953. Germany was listed as his country of birth on his U.S. passport (in the mid-nineties, he apparently held at least two passports, one from the United States and one from Greece), but he has told some of his oil-business acquaintances that he is a native of Austria and that his father spent twenty years as an overseas employee of Mobil. He studied production management and oil engineering at Nicholls State University, in Louisiana, and graduated in 1975. In the nineteen-eighties, Eronat began doing business with Bryan Williams and Mobil in Nigeria, and he worked closely with Williams over the next dozen years. Eronat controls or acts on behalf of at least six companies that engaged in oil trading in the Persian Gulf, the former Soviet Union, and Africa.

Williams advanced the Orenburg deal by financing a company known as Vaeko Europe Limited, which Eronat controlled. The plan was that Vaeko, using Mobil's money, would pay the Kazakhs for raw materials and send them on to the Russians; the Russians



Kazakhstan's deal to swap oil with Iran, which can ship crude through the Persian Gulf for resale on the world market, offered an alternative to Russia's pipeline.

GUY BILLOUT

were to send refined products back for resale. Vaeko Europe would be repaid, and Mobil theoretically would recoup its investment, with the profits. But Mobil documents from the internal inquiry indicate that more oil went from Kazakhstan to Russia than came back—much more. The facilities that Chernomyrdin's family controlled reaped enormous profits, presumably, since they did not pay the Kazakhs in full for the raw materials they processed and sold elsewhere. The money Mobil had put into Vaeko disappeared. A Mobil document fixed the loss, as of October, 1997, at seventy-six million dollars. James Giffen was directly involved. In December of 1996, Williams, writing on Mobil Sales and Supply stationery, with a copy to Eronat, told a colleague in Mobil's office to draft a "side letter" and "get it to Jim Giffen." The letter was to deal with Karachaganak and the delivery of inventory. "You do not need to include any condition," Williams added, "since that is part of the gentlemen's agreement." The letter did not specify which agreement, and which gentlemen, Williams was referring to.

The contract Mobil had in the Orenburg deal was with Vaeko Europe, the company controlled by Eronat, and not with the processing plants, and thus the company's sole legal claim for the lost millions was against Eronat. But going after Eronat posed risks. Eronat knew much more about his and Williams's dealings in the former Soviet Union than did most senior executives at Mobil. In an interview last fall, one of Eronat's lawyers told me that he had warned Jerry R. Bidinger, the senior Mobil lawyer on the investigating team, that Mobil "did not want Eronat as an adversary." Eronat himself told Mobil during the internal investigation, one official said, that "it was always understood that the debt would never be collected."

The Orenburg losses were noticed by financial analysts at Mobil's headquarters, in Fairfax, Virginia, but they didn't take their concerns to the C.E.O. "These accountants went to Williams and said 'What's going on?' " a former company officer recalled. "He said Noto knew all about it and had approved it." Nothing more was done. The losses soon became known throughout headquarters. "It wasn't that the money was lost but the specifics of how it was handled that shook Fairfax up," Don Voelte, the former Mobil vice-president, told me. "When I ran into Bryan and said, 'What happened?' he said the Russian mafia had got hold of it, and it was gone." Mobil's lawyers eventually concluded, according to one internal summary, that "Mobil had long-term projects and interests—Tengiz—in mind when it entered this transaction."

There is also evidence in Mobil's files that the company's top executives had been told that the Orenburg deal was deeply flawed. In late 1998, Mobil's lawyers prepared a memorandum for Noto, suggesting that the Kazakh leadership had a personal stake: "Karachaganak is a delicate matter for high Kazakh officials, particularly Mr. Balgymbayev." The Russian processing plants, the memorandum said, "are run, controlled or influenced by a number of . . . political, personal, familial and, to some extent, even criminal interests."

Mobil concluded its negotiations for the Tengiz oil field on May 3, 1996. The final price was just over a billion dollars, and bought Mobil a twenty-five-per-cent share in Tengizchevroil, or T.C.O., the consortium that

"I wasn't speaking to you. I was speaking to my imaginary husband."

managed Tengiz. Chevron maintained its fifty-per-cent investment in the field, leaving the Kazakhs with twenty-five per cent; both Mobil and Chevron set up offices in Almaty to market the oil. Tengiz now produces well over a billion dollars in crude-oil revenues each year. Edward Chow, the former Chevron executive, told me that Kazakhstan's willingness to let another American company buy into the Tengiz field without competitive bidding surprised insiders in the oil business, given the strong interest of European oil companies.

It is clear that James Giffen had an influential role in advising the Kazakh government on Mobil's purchase, and had every reason to anticipate earning a huge fee for his banking company, Mercator, in doing so. Forty-one million dollars of Mobil's billion-dollar payment eventually went to Mercator. In June of 1995, however, according to a document from Tabbah's court papers, Mercator had quietly signed a partnership agreement with one of Friedhelm Eronat's companies providing for the two companies to share any fees from the sale of stakes in Tengiz and other oil-and-gas fields in Kazakhstan. It could not be learned what Eronat did to justify his share of the Tengiz money.

Mobil participants in the Tengiz negotiations worried constantly about the possibility of payments going astray. Don Voelte told me that the company was concerned that the purchase payments it was sending to the Kazakh government via Swiss banks might be diverted for personal use by the Kazakh leaders. "It would be easy," he said. "That was our nightmare scenario—that the money would end up in the wrong hands. That scared us to death. You wonder and speculate, but you just don't know."

Paul Soane, a retired Mobil vice-president who helped negotiate the final purchase price of Tengiz, recalled that the company's lawyers reviewed the wire transfers with "a fine-tooth comb to insure that everything we were doing was perfectly legal." Mobil's responsibility ended at that point, Soane said. "We confirmed that the accounts designated by the Kazakhstan government were in fact Kazakhstan government accounts. Beyond that, what could we do? Who the hell are we to question the Kazakhstan government's choice of banks? Once the money leaves Mobil and enters Kazakhstan government accounts, we have no way of determining where it goes."

Former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, who was Nazarbayev's political rival and is now living in exile in London, and who directs the opposition against him from there, told me that by the end of 1997, when he left office, Mobil had paid between $550 million and $600 million of the total Tengiz purchase price, but that only $350 million had actually reached the Kazakh treasury. Kazhegeldin said that he did not know what happened to the remaining Mobil bank transfers. But, he said, "I know the money never came in."

Similarly, in July, 1997, the *Financial Times* described unnamed Kazakhstan government officials as saying that "it has proved impossible to pinpoint" the final destination of five hundred million dollars of Mobil's Tengiz payment. The money, which amounted to three per cent of Kazakhstan's gross domestic product, "did not make it into the Kazakh budget," the newspaper reported.

III—THE SWAP

According to Farhat Tabbah's complaint, it was Friedhelm Eronat who first spoke to him about a swap of oil between Kazakhstan and Iran, on February 12, 1996. Eronat's pitch was provocative. Eronat assured him, Tabbah said, that he and Giffen had "great influence with ministers in the government of the State of Kazakhstan." A ten-year, multibillion-dollar oil swap involving Kazakhstan, Iran, and Mobil was on the table. According to Tabbah, Eronat claimed that Bryan Williams had designated him to represent Mobil in the negotiations.

Tabbah was an obvious choice as a middleman. He and Eronat had known each other for a long time and shared office space. Tabbah, a naturalized British subject who was born fifty years ago into a prominent family in Jordan, operates several trading companies from offices in Amman and in London's Mayfair district. In the past decade, he has worked for himself or as an agent in Africa, the Middle East, and Russia for firms such as Siemens and Babcock International.

He also has extensive business ties to Iran and Iraq. His friends include two former high-level American intelligence officials, who describe him as a reliable businessman. His enemies include the men he named in connection with the Iranian oil swap, who describe him as an angry, bitter man, a liar, and a thief, driven by a personal vendetta.

Kazakhstan's desire to swap oil with Iran was widely known in the oil industry. Kazakhstan's only ports are on the Caspian Sea, which has no route by water to the ocean, whereas Iran can ship oil south through the Persian Gulf and on to the Indian Ocean. In May, 1995, however, the Clinton Administration had issued an executive order strengthening the sanctions against Iran. Under the executive order, American companies were prohibited from trading with Iran, which included any involvement in a swap, without a license from the Treasury Department.

Kazakhstan had had on-and-off swap talks with Iran, but they intensified after Mobil bought into T.C.O., the Tengiz consortium. In the documents and contracts that passed between the two countries in the next months, Mobil was not named as a party. Instead, Munay-Impex, a state-owned Kazakh oil company, agreed to the swap with the National Iranian Oil Company, or NIOC. Oil from Tengiz would be sent by rail to the Kazakh port of Aktau, on the Caspian Sea. It would then be blended with oil from Buzachi, a field that was owned solely by the Kazakh government, and transported by tanker to the northern Iranian town of Neka, to be refined and delivered to Tehran for use there. In return for the Kazakh oil, crude oil of an equivalent value from Iranian fields close by the Persian Gulf, more than four hundred miles south, would be picked up by a shipper, designated by Kazakhstan, for profitable resale on the world market. None of the oil in the Kazakhstan-Iran swap would directly belong to Mobil, but U.S. sanctions law barred Americans from facilitating such a deal, even if they didn't own the oil.

Tabbah claims that Eronat wanted him to be one of the facilitators. He was to arrange the first stage of the shipping—to Neka—and an Iranian visa for Eronat, and was to introduce him to the right people in Iran. Tabbah says Eronat told him that he would be paid a fee or commission on each barrel of swapped oil; the exact terms were to be agreed upon later.

According to Tabbah's affidavit, Eronat assured Tabbah and two colleagues that Fulton International Limited, the trading company Tabbah was associated with, would receive a letter of appointment from Mobil signed by Bryan Williams. A copy of a fax on letterhead from Mobil's headquarters, dated February 26, 1996—two weeks after Tabbah says he met with Eronat—and signed by Williams, was obtained independently for this account. In it, Williams sets out "my Company's wish to engage the services of Fulton International Ltd. to supply consultancy and operations support in connection with activities that are to be specified." The request was conditional, Williams added, on the involvement of a certain Fulton aide with experience in the former Soviet Union "to undertake the work we intend to pass to you." In Tabbah's view, Mobil was in. (Williams denies that this letter had anything to do with the swap.)

Tabbah's most important contact in Tehran was Kambiz Salehi, an Iranian businessman who, as a teen-ager, had participated in the 1979 uprising against the Shah. Under the Khomeini government, Salehi had worked for the Ministry of Oil and then set up a successful engineering business in Tehran. In a lengthy affidavit prepared in support of Tabbah's claim, Salehi wrote, "As I had been a revolutionary since age ten, the government and its advisers saw me as part of themselves, and I am trusted by them."

In early 1996, Salehi said, Tabbah came to see him about the swap. Although Tabbah was a family friend, Salehi expected to profit from the deal. "I expressly discussed about what would be in it for me," he wrote. He says he arranged a visa for Eronat and then met him at the Tehran airport on February 26, 1996 (the same day that Wil-

"Oh, and, incidentally, Whit, I'm afraid there's room for only one haircut like this around here."

liams sent his fax engaging Fulton International's services). A delegation of officials from the Kazakh Ministry of Oil, headed by Nurlan Balgymbayev, had arrived as well, for a meeting with their Iranian counterparts.

In his affidavit, Salehi says he went directly to Hashemi Rafsanjani, the President of Iran, to insure that API, an Italian shipping company with ties to Mobil, was nominated to be the over-all operator for the swaps. Biagio Cinelli, the managing director of API, had worked with Eronat and Williams before, and had done business for Mobil in Africa and Europe since the nineteen-eighties.

In May, 1996, Salehi wrote, he accompanied Eronat and Cinelli to their first negotiating session with Dr. Ghanimi Fard, the director of international affairs at NIOC, at the company offices in Tehran. According to Salehi, "Eronat was representing himself as Mobil's representative, and every half hour or so Eronat would report back to Bryan Williams, of Mobil, and would also on occasion telephone James Giffen, of Mercator."

Ghanimi Fard, interviewed by telephone at the NIOC offices in London, confirmed that an American had attended the meeting with Cinelli, but was unable to recall his name. Ghanimi Fard did remember that the American "was introduced to me as being from Mobil" and had given him a business card with Mobil's name on it. "Once in the first meeting, they were telling us that Mobil was not in because of the sanctions, and it'd be better to do it through API—API was there to solve the problem." Cinelli, asked about the meeting, said that he made many trips to Tehran. Asked if he knew Eronat, he responded, testily, "Why should I say yes or no?"

Salehi wrote that when he asked Eronat for a written commitment from Mobil on how much he would be paid, Eronat told him, "Mobil cannot give it because of sanctions and so forth, but I can give it. I am 'Mr. Mobil.' "

Mobil denies that Eronat was the company's agent in the swap, as does Williams. "We never admitted to any dealings with Tabbah in the swap," a company employee told me. "We have deals with Eronat's companies, and if he wants to do a swap that's his business." However, the in-house investigation found evidence that Eronat's business was also Mobil's business, especially at critical points in the swap talks. When Eronat was meeting with the Iranians, Williams asked a subordinate at Mobil headquarters, in Virginia, to fax a chemical analysis of the Tengiz crude to Eronat's room at the Esteghlal Grand Hotel, in Tehran. Williams also acknowledged to the investigators that he had twice offered comments on an early draft of the Iran-Kazakhstan swap contract. He had done so not because Mobil had any financial interest in the swap, he explained, but simply because of his "friendship and business relationship" with Eronat.

"How can I work with you constantly looking over my shoulder?"

While Eronat was allegedly communicating with Williams, Giffen coördinated other aspects of the negotiations on behalf of the Kazakh leadership, receiving updates by fax and telecom on pricing and other issues as the negotiations proceeded.

Giffen brought something else to the swap talks: bonhomie. He was famous for providing the best Scotch and the most exotic party gifts to the Kazakh leaders. One consultant who was hired by Giffen during Nazarbayev's 1998 Presidential reëlection campaign told me that Giffen spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on gifts. Salehi says he got a firsthand glimpse of the largesse. He wrote that while he and Giffen were waiting for a flight to Almaty Giffen showed him "a watch which he said was a Patek Philippe costing thirty-five thousand dollars which he was taking to Minister Balgymbayev as a present." (Giffen denies the story.) Giffen was also vain. "He bragged about his suits from London, bragged about his shoes from one particular shoemaker, bragged about his suite at the Dorchester," the consultant said. "He bragged about how he could force anyone to do anything. That's why he's in all this trouble now." Giffen also bragged about his authority inside Kazakhstan, the consultant added, but he always referred to Nazarbayev as "the boss." (The consultant was interviewed at length by the F.B.I. this spring.)

By the spring of 1996, word of the pending swap deal was circulating in Washington, and Clinton Administration officials began to get edgy. One government official recalled that Sheila Heslin, a National Security Council aide who dealt with Caspian energy issues, summoned Mobil executives, including Bryan Williams, to a meeting to ask them about any plans they might have to swap oil with Iran, and to remind them of the U.S. sanctions. "The Mobil people didn't react at all," the official told me. "They kept asking, 'What do you know? What do you know?' " Later, James Giffen, who was on a routine visit to Washington on behalf of the Kazakh government, was told by Heslin that the Nazarbayev government would face huge political problems with Congress and the Administration if it did a swap with Iran. Giffen quickly emphasized that it was Mobil, and not just Kazakhstan, setting up the swap. When he was reminded that Mobil could not legally participate, he tried to reassure her, according to the official, that Mobil was "smart. They'll do it through a European trader." (Giffen denies making the statements.)

Soon afterward, Heslin called in Mobil executives for a second meeting. This time, she told them she had "information from a pretty good source" about the planned oil swap and its potential illegality. (When I asked Heslin to comment, she said that keeping American businessmen "up to date on U.S. policy, including the meetings with Giffen and Mobil, was a normal and routine part of my job.") Mobil was put on notice.

Ann Pickard, a Mobil executive in London who attended the second meeting, later told Mobil's lawyers that she felt "blindsided" by Heslin's warning. The notes of a subsequent interview show that Pickard returned to London with instructions to "investigate" Heslin's warning. She learned, according to the notes, that Bryan Williams had set up an introduction between API, the Italian shipper, and the Kazakhs, and had done so because the Kazakh leaders "were worried that Iranians would take advantage of them" in the swap negotiation. Pickard told the investigators that the Kazakhs had "asked Mobil for help."

SHE IS SO HIGH-MAINTENANCE.
NICK DOWNES

IV—RECRIMINATIONS

In May, 1996, President Nazarbayev, accompanied by his oil minister, Balgymbayev, flew to Tehran for a meeting with President Rafsanjani, and they signed protocols on transit fees. The swap deal was done, with only the technical details to be ironed out.

The swap contract was summarized in a two-page memorandum prepared in December of 1996 by Peter Felter, a London lawyer who represented the Italian shipper API, the Kazakh government, and Eronat himself during the negotiations. (He still represents Eronat.) API would be given title to the Iranian crude at Kharg Island, in the Persian Gulf, and then would arrange the sale of the oil on the world market. The oil from Tengiz, Felter's memorandum stated, would represent "the Kazakh government's share in TCO"—that is, the proceeds would be paid to Kazakhstan. There was no provision in Felter's memorandum for any funds to be paid to Mobil and Chevron, the other partners in T.C.O.

Even so, the pending swap put both Mobil and Chevron in a delicate position in terms of American sanctions law, and Chevron took steps to insulate itself from any allegations of illegal trading. Edward Chow, who was then manager of international affairs in Chevron's Washington office, decided to visit the N.S.C. to inform officials there of the proposed swap. "I was concerned about being involved," Chow says. "The swap was against the law, and I wanted to make sure that Chevron's hands were clean." Chow, accompanied by a company lawyer, also visited the Treasury Department, and formally advised officials there that Chevron, despite its stake in T.C.O., had nothing to do with facilitating the swap.

Salehi's and Tabbah's accounts differ on the details of the proposed swap commissions, but both men became convinced that everyone but them stood to make a great deal of money. They focus on what they describe as a double cross by their American and Kazakh partners. "I couldn't believe the greed of these guys," Salehi wrote. In midsummer, Tabbah said, they were informed by Eronat that their commission would be fifteen cents a barrel each. Two months later, Tabbah said, the commission was reduced to ten cents a barrel and, subsequently, to five cents. As they saw it, their big deal was evaporating, nickel by nickel.

Salehi was enraged. According to his court statement, at a heated meeting with Giffen and Eronat he called Eronat "a fucking liar." In Salehi's words, Eronat said that "he wanted to get out of this shitty deal," stating, "I am an American. I cannot do this." Eronat was afraid, Salehi wrote, that the United States would put the Kazakhstan-Iran swap contract "under a microscope."

The first and only swap between Kazakhstan and Iran took place in early 1997. It was reported in the trade press. But there was no mention of the role, if any, of Mobil or of any other American player. There was again an angry confrontation over commissions, after which Tabbah told an associate that Eronat had called him "a fucking Arab." (Eronat denies using this language.) According to Tabbah, this, from an old friend, was the final blow.

More than a year before the swap talks began, Tabbah and Eronat had begun sharing space in the Mayfair office suite, and they stored their files in a common area. Tabbah had access to reams of documents, faxes, and draft contracts received and sent by Eronat. Now he photocopied hundreds of pages from Eronat's files, documenting Eronat's many years of association with Giffen and Williams. Eronat recently asserted, through his lawyer, that his house had been burglarized twice at about this time, and that some of the stolen items had shown up among Tabbah's court papers. (No charges were filed, and Tabbah denies Eronat's accusations.)

No more oil was swapped between Kazakhstan and Iran. Most published accounts attributed this breakdown to the difficulties posed by sulfur compounds in the blend of Tengiz and Buzachi oil, which made it difficult for the Iranians to refine. Another factor, according to Tabbah, was Kambiz Salehi, who took his complaints about not being paid to the top of the Iranian government. "Kambiz didn't get his money, and went to the Iranians and screwed the deal," Tabbah told me.

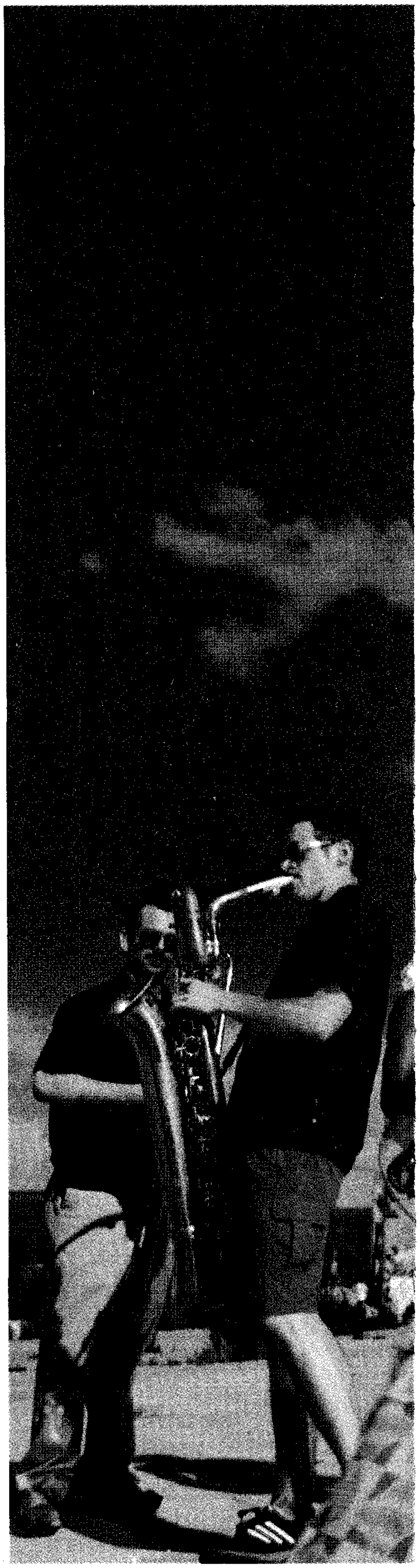
Eronat was also incensed. Tabbah, who had stolen his files, was now threatening to use those papers to force Eronat and Mobil to pay him. "I went to them for a settlement," Tabbah told me. "They said it was blackmail." Tabbah eventually met with Bryan Williams, who, Tabbah says, offered to pay all his expenses plus three or four million dollars. Tabbah then insisted on more than ten times as much: forty-one million dollars, the amount he claimed he would have earned on commissions had all the swaps taken place. (This was also the precise amount that Giffen's company had been paid in the Tengiz deal.)

Bryan Williams's lawyer, David Schertler, said, in a letter to *The New Yorker*, that although Mobil never had a business arrangement with Tabbah, Williams had acted as an intermediary and attempted to resolve the dispute: "Mr. Tabbah said he had nothing against Mr. Williams or Mobil but that he wanted to ruin Mr. Eronat because of a personal insult. . . . During the next several hours, Mr. Tabbah made many highly emotional outbursts against Mr. Eronat." But any talk of three million dollars, Schertler wrote, came from the overwrought Tabbah: "Mr. Williams told Mr. Tabbah that neither he nor Mobil would ever pay Tabbah a cent but that he would relay his settlement demand to Mr. Eronat."

On July 29th, Tabbah telephoned Williams from Washington and told him that he was meeting with his lawyer, and had decided to sue everyone: Mobil, Giffen, Eronat, and the Kazakhs.

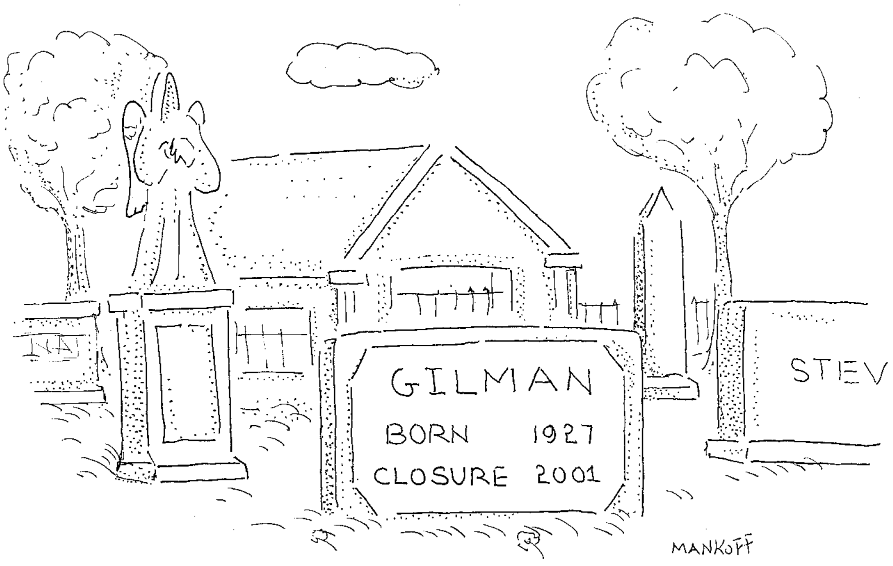
A meeting was scheduled at Tabbah's lawyer's office. Eronat was accompanied by two lawyers from Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, who represented both him and Giffen. (Williams, who was invited to come, had declined, saying that the papers, and the swap, had nothing to do with him.) Many of the documents were placed on a table for Eronat and his lawyers to examine. Eronat became visibly agitated when he found a document that purported to list details of overseas bank accounts belonging to him or his companies in Switzerland, Liechtenstein, New York, Scotland, and Spain. He and his lawyers then reviewed the papers in private. After they left, a secretary took count and determined that the list of bank accounts was missing. A call was made to Akin, Gump. Within a few hours, the document was returned. On being asked to comment for this article, Eronat said through a lawyer that he had "merely recovered his own document that had been stolen from him."

Tabbah's threat failed: his former associates denied that he was owed anything, and they certainly had no intention of paying the full commission for a ten-year swap that had been aborted. (One Akin, Gump attorney said, "The documents made no sense," and did not on their face provide evidence of



SHOWCASE BY ERIN PATRICE O'BRIE
in African and Latin influences. Like all gre

ntibalas is Spanish for "bulletproof," and even on record the local funk ensemble lives up to its name, with a hard-as-armor sound rich nk bands, though, Antibalas explodes onstage, where the dozen-plus members work themselves, and their audiences, into a frenzy.



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wrongdoing.) Tabbah says that his Washington lawyer advised him not to file a civil suit in the United States, because his grievance—breach of an oral contract to pay commissions—originated in an alleged swap agreement that apparently would have violated federal sanctions law. "He told me that you can't sue a thief for the money he stole," Tabbah recalled. "He said I had to report everything to the U.S. government. He advised me to go to the Justice Department." After some hesitation, Tabbah said, he arranged to meet with two special agents of the U.S. Customs Service. "I gave them copies of everything," he told me.

By midsummer of 1997, Mobil headquarters was on full alert. There was anxiety among some executives about being closely allied with Giffen and Eronat. Notes from the Mobil investigation also express concern about putting too many documents in the hands of such "dubious individuals and their lawyers," adding that their "disclosure would serve only to expose Mobil's inner workings and high-level judgments to avowed enemies, suspect characters and the press."

On September 19, 1997, in London, Tabbah sued Eronat, Williams, Giffen, their companies, and the Kazakh oil minister, Balgymbayev. Mobil moved to protect its documents from public view. In May of 1998, Mobil's lawyer in London, Ian Taylor, informed the court that "many of the documents were written by Mobil employees and sent to Mobil employees or are internal Mobil documents," and should be considered confidential.

The court agreed, and ruled that Tabbah had no right to disclose the contents of Eronat's documents to any third parties. Giffen and Eronat filed counterclaims, through their companies, as did Mobil, denying Tabbah's allegations. Over the next two years, all the parties agreed to settle the suit, without any admission of liability, thus avoiding a trial. The counterclaims also dropped away, but Tabbah was still the big loser: he was compelled to pay Eronat and the others more than five hundred thousand dollars in court costs, in part because, by attempting to tell the swap story with his initial, lengthy filings in open court, he had violated British court procedure. Tabbah also agreed to turn over to Eronat all the documents in his possession, and never to disclose the confidential information they contained.

At one point during this period, Mobil's top management decided to formally seek a license from the Treasury Department to swap oil with Iran. The company withdrew its application after being unofficially advised, company executives said, that the license would be denied because the Administration's priority was to keep Iran economically isolated. Mobil also could not get a license to swap a small amount of oil between Turkmenistan and Iran.

V—MOBIL AND THE MOB

On May 5, 1997, Mobil's Global Security office was ordered to help Samuel H. Gillespie III, the company's general counsel, review all business dealings in the former Soviet Union "with respect to compliance with applicable law." The company's lawyers specifically wanted to learn more about the swap and about Bryan Williams's dealings with Eronat and Giffen. By the fall, with Tabbah's affidavit and some of his documents in hand, they had expanded the investigation.

Over the next several months, Mobil's team of lawyers and investigators, buttressed by the attorneys from Patton Boggs, conducted more than forty interviews with employees in various parts of the world and reviewed thousands of contracts, telexes, and E-mails. The investigation encountered unexpected difficulties; in some cases in which Williams appeared to have committed Mobil resources to deals with Eronat, a person close to the investigation says, "we couldn't even locate contracts inside Mobil."

The inquiry led the investigators deep into the corrupt business world of post-Communist Russia. Under the terms of Boris Yeltsin's privatization programs, huge profits could be made from Russia's vast oil reserves, which were controlled mainly by a new class of oligarchs. Most of these oligarchs amassed fortunes by exploiting their political connections in the Kremlin or the provinces to buy up state assets for comically low prices. In theory, hundreds of millions of barrels of oil were to be sold domestically at government-controlled prices, to help ordinary citizens get through the Russian winter; a barrel might be sold for the same price as a few packs of cigarettes. In practice, brokers could buy the price-capped oil using rubles—the exchange rate in 1995 was roughly five thousand rubles to a dollar—and then make the payoffs necessary to get export licenses. They would sell the oil to foreign firms for dollars or Deutsche marks, and all involved—the brokers, the bureaucrats, the buyers, and the oligarchs—got rich.

To buy oil for Mobil, Bryan Williams

turned to an aggressive broker named Peter Yantchev. Yantchev's company, Balkar Trading, was initially an automobile importer and used-car dealer, but his employees soon began swapping cars for crude oil and selling gasoline from tanker trucks on the streets of Moscow. Even as Yantchev built Balkar into one of Russia's most successful oil-trading companies, the Balkar headquarters retained the appearance of a glorified chop shop. Tom Holst, who had been an area manager for Mobil, described to Mobil investigators a visit to the company. "I was asked to visit the vice-director of Balkar," Holst recalled. "I was expecting to find an office. Instead I found an auto assembly plant which was surrounded on the outside by people selling car parts. I thought to myself that this was a perfect cover for money laundering." Holst told the investigators that he had reported his concerns in writing to company superiors but "never heard anything from them about it." Aziz Jhaveri, a chemical engineer from India who joined Mobil in 1968, told an investigator that he thought Balkar was "not the kind of company Mobil would do business with." According to the Moscow press, Balkar was a corrupt enterprise, and Yantchev was able to buy oil at bargain rates because of his good relationship with Prime Minister Chernomyrdin.

None of this stopped Williams. Between August of 1994 and June of 1996, Mobil signed contracts worth more than a billion dollars with Balkar Trading. It then disbursed more than six hundred million dollars to the Swiss bank account of a second entity, Balkar International. When the Mobil investigators looked into these transfers, they learned that Balkar International appeared to be controlled by Friedhelm Eronat. (Eronat signed the company's invoices, and, according to a Mobil memorandum, it appeared that he and his lawyer, Peter Felter, had "complete access to Balkar's books and records.")

In January of 1995, according to a report printed later that month in *Nefte Compass*, an energy-business newsletter, Yantchev accompanied Williams and Mobil's C.E.O., Noto, to a meeting with Chernomyrdin. Russia was then in the midst of a currency crisis and the war in Chechnya, and Noto offered to help by lending the government a billion dollars. In return, he asked for a five-year supply of crude oil on preferential terms. (The proposal fell through.)

Several months later, Yantchev was arrested by Russian federal authorities for allegedly paying bribes and for tax evasion. One of his deputies was also jailed. Nevertheless, a summary by the Mobil investigators noted, Bryan Williams "continued the relationship with Balkar for approximately one year after Mr. Yantchev's arrest." The government never brought Yantchev's case to trial, and he was released after two years in jail.

In 1997, a Mobil senior vice-president in London was chastised by V. P. Kolbayev, a Russian Central Bank official, for the company's delay in providing records that the bank had requested for an inquiry into Balkar Trading. "As you have not sent the required document to the Bank of Russia," Kolbayev wrote, "we regret to admit that Mobil Sales and Supply Corporation does not seem to be interested in rendering assistance to the currency-control authorities of the Russian Federation. The above fact may testify to your company's participation in illegal operations, which might undermine Mobil's high reputation."

Williams had also insisted, over the objection of Mobil treasurers and in violation of company rules, on setting up a special bank account for the Balkar transactions at the Banque Indosuez, in Geneva—the bank that Eronat was using for Balkar International. Williams explained to company officials, according to an investigative summary, that the new account had been opened to receive payments from Kazakhstan. However, the summary noted, it was "not used for that purpose until twelve months later." Meanwhile, in the fall of 1995 at least twenty-three million dollars was transferred in the course of four days from the new Mobil account to Balkar's account. "These payments," the summary noted, were "outside normal payables procedures."

In a section on Balkar marked "final comments," a Patton Boggs memorandum described how, in an interview with investigators, Attila Kovacs, a Hungarian who worked for Williams in Mobil's Moscow office, "got a bit defensive and stated that the objective in the F.S.U."—the former Soviet Union—"was not to make a profit, but to get into the F.S.U. and make contacts."

Williams, and Mobil, had also agreed to a series of contracts in the mid-nineties with Atlas Trading, a notorious oil-dealing firm controlled by Yosif Kobzon, a popular singer who was often referred to as the Russian Frank Sinatra. Kobzon was a former member of parliament who had been denied a

"I've never been wild about this bar, but it does get you where you want to go."

United States visa after being cited in American intelligence reports as a leader of the Russian mafia. Attila Kovacs acknowledged to investigators that Atlas was known as a "strong company"—one with which "most Russians would not like to deal." Another Mobil employee described a meeting at which one of Mobil's bankers stated that he would not touch Atlas "with a barge pole."

Williams authorized Mobil to advance an estimated forty-five million dollars to Atlas to enable it to buy Russian crude oil, which it would then trade elsewhere, at a high profit. Atlas was to pay off the advance in monthly installments of five million dollars, but after a few months it simply stopped paying, blaming the chronic Russian monetary crisis. Atlas had essentially stiffed Mobil and dared it to come after its money. Florence Fee, a Russian-speaking oil manager, was hired by Mobil in 1997 and assigned to the Moscow office. She sent an E-mail on June 1, 1998, to a dozen Mobil executives warning the company to be careful in pursuing the money. "When you are talking about attaching the assets of Atlas," she wrote, "you are basically talking about crossing the mafia. The mafia do not play by the same rules as Western business or legal circles, and have no regard whatsoever for the law. . . . There have (so far) been few attacks on foreigners in this country, but those there have been have always been linked to attempts to cross the mafia."

Mobil now found itself in a Russian version of Dodge City. Would it really be dangerous to attempt to recover the Atlas money, as Fee said? Mobil's Global Security office looked into crime statistics in post-Communist Russia and noted that at least five American businessmen had been "killed due to disputes (presumably)."

Bryan Williams, meanwhile, had made extraordinary efforts to minimize the extent of Mobil's losses to Atlas. He arranged on paper for the sale of Mobil products to a company that, in turn, sold them to an Atlas subsidiary. Mobil then repurchased the Mobil products—again, on paper—from the Atlas subsidiary, at a higher price. The "profit" Atlas made was supposed to be credited against its debt to Mobil. The deal went forward, Patton Boggs noted in a report, "although it did not have any apparent valid business purpose."

One insider said of the Atlas deal, "If the shareholders ever look at it, they'll ask about due diligence." An attempt had to be made to force Atlas to return the money, but it had to be done in a way that did not endanger anyone. Mobil's solution was simple. It initiated arbitration proceedings with Atlas in Stockholm, and won a judgment—and then it did nothing. A Mobil official told me, "We got a default judgment and wrote it off, but it looked like we tried to recover the money." Mobil made little effort to find Atlas's assets outside Russia or, as some still urged, to compel repayment of the money, because, an insider said, the tough guys running Atlas "wouldn't like it."

In a letter to *The New Yorker*, Williams's lawyer stated that Williams "is unaware of any connection between Atlas Trading and organized crime."

FLIGHT

1.
That glass was it filled with alcohol, water, or light

At ten
I turned you into a religion

The solitary
four-foot priest of you, I kept
the little manger candle
burning, I
kept your black half-inch of
scripture
in the hiding place

Destroyer
of the world

That empty

glass

2.
In which city was it, in fourth or fifth grade, Mother
read in the newspaper you'd be appearing
and dressed me up in suit
and little tie
and took me
I wanted to run to you—who were all these people?—
I sat alone beaming
at you who could not meet my eyes, and after
you shyly approached
and shook my hand

3.
If I'm walking the streets of a city
covering every square inch of the continent

VII—BETTING THE COMPANY

Mobil investigators interviewed Bryan Williams in February, 1998. He denied or offered an alternative explanation for every major point raised in Tabbah's affidavit and his documents. He had no authority to negotiate a swap deal on behalf of Mobil, he said, and had not done so. He had never

all its lights out
and empty of people,
even then
you are there

If I'm walking the streets
overwhelmed with this love for the living

I will still be a blizzard at sea

Since you left me at eight I have always been lonely

star-far from the person right next to me, but

closer to me than my bones you

you are there

4.
It's 1963 again, the old Minneapolis airport so vast
   to me, and I am running
after the long flight alone I am running
running into your huge arms—
Now
I am forty-five now and I am dreaming,
dreaming—nobody
will ever believe this—I'm dreaming
we are together again we are both forty-five
and I have you all to myself this time, and we are walking
together we're walking down a glowing-blue tunnel
we're on time for our flight, I can hardly believe it
we are travelling somewhere together alone
God knows where we are going, and who cares
we're together, walking
and happily talking
and laughing, and breathing

—*Franz Wright*

met Kambiz Salehi, and had discussed the swap with Balgymbayev only to tell him that Mobil could not be involved. His business dealings with Vaeko, he said, according to a Patton Boggs summary of the interview, were always "at arm's length." He had "no idea" what involvement Eronat might have had with the swap. The fax engaging Fulton International for services "to be specified" was sent, Williams explained, not to secure Tabbah's services in the oil swap but to get an employee's help in recovering Mobil's money in the Orenburg deal.

Williams did acknowledge that he had commented on the early draft of the swap agreement that had been sent to him by Eronat. The Patton Boggs lawyers then showed him a fax from James Giffen, dated September 26, 1996, and addressed to him and Eronat at Mobil. In it, Giffen reported "on the status of Karachaganak and the swap transactions." The Patton Boggs summary noted, "Williams had never seen this."

Williams, while maintaining that he had done nothing wrong, told the Mobil lawyers that he was "just a laborer in the vineyard." He would not go into details. "He gave us the kiss-off," someone close to the Mobil investigation said. The Mobil lawyers also tried to determine whether Williams had any hidden assets. None were found. The investigation did learn that Williams, while working full time as a Mobil executive, had been one of the directors of a highly successful solid-waste-management company, United Waste Systems, that had offices in Greenwich, Connecticut. He held more than a million dollars in stock in the company. Two months after his meeting with Mobil's lawyers, Williams took early retirement.

Some at Mobil found it difficult to believe that Williams's investment decisions in Russia could have been made without higher authority. It could not be learned whether the full extent of the investigative findings in Russia was conveyed to Mobil's top leadership. (Lucio Noto, who after the merger became vice-chairman and senior deputy to ExxonMobil's C.E.O., Lee Raymond, announced his retirement in January.) The company's official position was—and continues to be—that there is no evidence that any of Williams's putative actions were sanctioned by his superiors. One former Mobil vice-president recalled that "Williams was a loner"—a "crude-oil boy" who did not report to management through the normal corporate hierarchy. Another former Mobil executive, Don Voelte, told me that if there was any serious contemplation of an oil swap with Iran the number of corporate executives who knew of it "had to be very small—one or two persons—because we were terrified of anything like that."

By early 1999, with Bryan Williams gone and Tabbah's lawsuit still unsettled, Mobil had cut its business ties to Eronat and his various trading companies. Eronat, through his London lawyer, Peter Felter, accused the company of unfairly freezing him out because of the Tabbah allegations—claiming, as a Mobil document put it, that he had become an "institutional pariah" inside the company. Although Mobil remained confident of its ability to show that it had not authorized any involvement in the swap, some in the company were concerned about balancing the desire to end the relationship with Eronat against the need to insure that he would be a friendly witness in the Tabbah case if it did go to trial. They worried that Eronat would testify that he had been Mobil's agent in the swap and other dealings. Mobil repeatedly told Eronat that Williams's retirement and the company's decision to stop working with Eronat had nothing to do with Tabbah. Internally, however, as one March, 1999, memorandum stated, "it cannot be said that Tabbah's agency-related allegations and the concerns they raised were of zero significance in the circumstances leading to Williams's departure."

There were complications with Williams, too. He was being difficult about his pending testimony in the Tabbah case—testimony in which he was supposed to reaffirm emphatically that Eronat was not an agent for Mobil. Williams was now insisting on being paid for his testimony, and also on being provided with a full release from Mobil for any adverse consequences. On February 24, 1999, Ian Taylor, Mobil's London lawyer, told Williams in a letter what he, as a former practicing lawyer, surely knew—that "the grant of a release as a precondition to any testimony would significantly undermine the weight of that testimony." A few months later, Mobil went to federal court in northern Virginia to compel Williams's testimony. The internal documents reflected the growing anxiety at headquarters about just what Williams—identified in the papers as "JBW"—would say. The fear was that he would try to help Eronat get compensation for his lost business. Williams "can't help Eronat win it while at the same time screwing Mobil," a memorandum noted. "He can't say 'my buddy wasn't involved at all' "—in the swap—"because his buddy has already admitted involvement. If Williams tries to sneak in that Mobil was involved, he contradicts himself because he's already sworn that Mobil wasn't. In so contradicting himself, he destroys his credibility."

A May memorandum noted, "We all seem to agree that Eronat (with JBW perhaps in tow) wants money when all this litigation is said and done, and is willing to go to great lengths to get it." By early summer, the documents show, a solution had been proposed—Mobil would offer Eronat $2.4 million. Eronat would not pursue his complaints against Mobil and would support the settlement with Tabbah. If the company decided to act on the proposal to pay Eronat something, a Mobil document reasoned, that payment should be delayed, so that there could be no suggestion that it was being made "to avoid troubling testimony." It is unclear whether Mobil actually paid Eronat any money.

There was one further step. A few months before the merger, Mobil notified Patton Boggs, which had been involved in at least two other sensitive inquiries for the company in the late nineteen-nineties, that its work on the matter was done. A senior Patton Boggs lawyer later complained to a colleague in Washington that Mobil's top management had "deep-sixed" the investigation into its dealings in Kazakhstan.

Williams's view today of his former employer is not known. He and Mobil agreed, in negotiations over his retirement, that neither would publicly disparage the other.

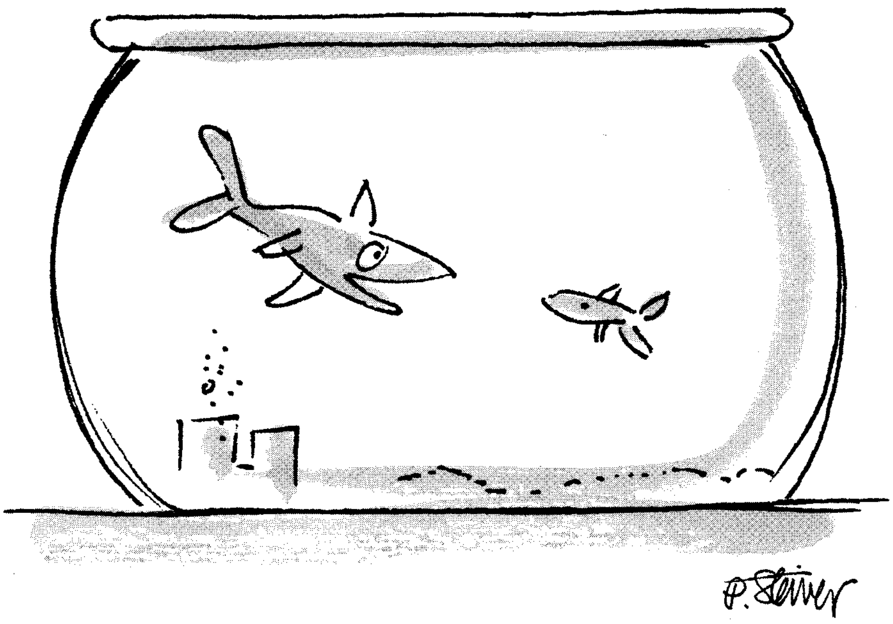
In 1999, Swiss banking officials discovered that about eighty-five million dollars that was destined for a Kazakhstan government account had been shifted to what seemed to be a personal account belonging to President Nazarbayev. Some of the money had been transferred there through accounts linked to James Giffen. The evidence was passed on to the Department of Justice—Giffen was, after all, an American citizen—and the U.S. investigation got under way.

There were published reports last summer that payments of more than sixty million dollars from three American oil companies—Mobil, Amoco, and Phillips—operating directly or through foreign subsidiaries, had allegedly been made to Swiss bank accounts linked to Giffen. Some thirty million dollars of that money, Swiss officials say, was subsequently shifted by Giffen into accounts controlled by Nazarbayev; his oil minister, Balgymbayev; and the opposition leader, Kazhegeldin. Kazhegeldin publicly admitted that he had received six million dollars via the bank transfers, but insisted through his attorney that he had returned the money. Later, it became known that a second federal investigation, focussing on the swap, had begun in Washington.

Giffen's attorney told the *Wall Street Journal* last year that his client "has served as an official of the Republic of Kazakhstan since 1992 and has always acted lawfully and at the direction of that nation's leadership." Any funds that Giffen disbursed, he added, were used in developing Kazakh natural resources, promoting democracy, and building public works.

Giffen and Eronat, through a lawyer,

"Through some wacky cosmic gaffe, my fifteen minutes ended up going to Seabiscuit."



"You can be anything you want to be—no limits."

Thomas Yannucci, refused to be interviewed for this article. In statements relayed by Yannucci, both men were evasive. Documents made available for this article demonstrate that Giffen and Eronat were intimately involved in the proposed oil swap between Iran and Kazakhstan. Giffen's statement to *The New Yorker* said that, as "Counselor to the President of Kazakhstan," he "obviously was aware that the swap transaction was under negotiation." Nevertheless, he said, at no time did he or any of the companies with which he was associated "violate any law of the United States, including the sanctions regulations." Eronat answered a list of specific questions about his role with a general assault on Tabbah's credibility. This response was accompanied by a three-page letter from Peter Felter, the London lawyer who was the attorney for several of the parties in the Iran-Kazakhstan swap talks, including API. Felter, too, denounced Tabbah as a fraud and a thief, and "an unreliable and discredited witness," and added, "As far as we are concerned, there is no comparison between the credibility, standing and veracity of Mr. Tabbah as compared with Mobil." Williams's responses to questions from *The New Yorker*, as conveyed by his attorney, David Schertler, denigrate Tabbah as well.

Richard Lilley, Tabbah's solicitor, responded to the attacks on his client by describing him as "keen to coöperate with the U.S. Government, not out of vengeance but because he wants the matter to be investigated so that the truth about this extraordinary matter can be told." Lilley has been retained by the Justice Department in a continuing effort to persuade the British court to permit Tabbah to testify before an American grand jury. The government's sanctions case may yet hinge on his testimony.

Today, President Nazarbayev is said by State Department officials to be anxious about the inquiries, which he views as politically motivated. "He brings up the investigation with everybody," a former American Ambassador to Kazakhstan said. Last summer, the Kazakh parliament passed a law granting Nazarbayev lifetime immunity from any legal liability stemming from his actions in office, with the exception of high treason. More recently, the President angered his critics by pushing through passage of a bill that gave all Kazakh citizens the right to bring money into the country with no questions asked—and no tax assessed. Opposition leaders—declaring that the legislation amounted to little more than the legalization of money laundering—suggested that the biggest benefactors would be Nazarbayev and his intimates.

Nazarbayev has been cracking down on the press and on opposition political parties. During a visit to Almaty last winter, I met with dissident editors, who told of newspapers and radio stations being closed. One prominent journalist was convicted of insulting the President in print. An American lawyer who has practiced in the booming oil economy of Kazakhstan for the past five years explained that corruption had spread throughout the society: "Every act is something you have to pay for, and every job is bought and sold." He provided some going prices—three thousand dollars to become a policeman and the same amount to join the state customs service. It would cost hundreds of thousands, he added, to become a supreme-court justice.

In a speech in The Hague at the end of May, John Ashcroft, the U.S. Attorney General, said, "We must come to a recognition, personally and culturally, that corruption is not just a violation of the law, not just an economic disadvantage, and not merely a political problem, but that it is morally wrong." It should be "no longer seen as an accepted cost of doing business," he went on. "It is now widely recognized that the consequences of corruption can be devastating: devastating to economies, devastating to the poor, devastating to the legitimacy and stability of government and devastating to the moral fabric of society."

Ashcroft's concerns apparently are not shared by all in the international oil community. It may never be known why Mobil's leadership exercised so little oversight on the executives who dealt with Russia and Kazakhstan, and whose activities posed such enormous legal and financial risks. Indeed, the actions alleged in connection with the Tabbah case "bet the company," in the words of one person close to the Mobil investigation, "with maximum criminal and civil exposure." This person has concluded that people in the industry believed that the importance of oil in the national and world economy would insulate them from any complaints of wrongdoing. He summed up the oilmen's attitude this way: "What's man afraid of? The cold and the dark. We make it warm, and we make it light." ♦

ANNALS OF MEDICINE

THE MAN WHO COULDN'T STOP EATING

The most drastic treatment for morbid obesity may be the only one that works.

BY ATUL GAWANDE

At 7:30 A.M. on September 13, 1999, an anesthesiologist and two orderlies rolled our patient, whom I will call Vincent Caselli, into the operating room, where his attending surgeon and I awaited him. Caselli was a short man of middle age—five feet seven, fifty-four years old. The son of Italian immigrants, he had worked as a heavy-machine operator and road-construction contractor. (He and his men had paved a rotary in my own neighborhood.) He had been married for thirty-five years; he and his wife had three girls, all grown now. And he weighed four hundred and twenty-eight pounds. Housebound, his health failing, he no longer had anything resembling a normal life. And so, although he was afraid of surgery, he had come for a Roux-en-Y gastric-bypass operation. It is the most drastic treatment we have for obesity. It is also among the strangest operations surgeons perform. It removes no disease, repairs no defect or injury. It is an operation that is intended to control a person's will—to manipulate his innards so that he does not overeat—and it is soaring in popularity. Some forty-five thousand patients underwent obesity surgery in 1999, and the number is expected to double by 2003.

For the very obese, general anesthesia alone is a dangerous undertaking; major abdominal surgery can easily become a disaster. Obesity substantially increases the risk of respiratory failure, heart attacks, wound infections, hernias—almost every complication possible, including death. Nevertheless, Dr. Sheldon Randall, the attending surgeon, was relaxed, having done more than a thousand of these operations. I, the assisting resident, remained anxious. Watching Caselli struggle to shift himself from the stretcher onto the operating table and then stop halfway to catch his breath, I was afraid that he would fall in between. Once he was on the table, his haunches rolled off the sides, and I double-checked the padding that protected him from the table's sharp edges. He was naked except for his "universal"-size johnny, which covered him like a napkin, and a nurse put a blanket over his lower body for the sake of modesty. When we tried to lay him down, he lost his breath and started to turn blue, and the anesthesiologist had to put him to sleep sitting up. Only with the breathing tube and a mechanical ventilator in place were we able to lay him flat.

He was a mountain on the table. I am six feet two, but even with the table as low as it goes I had to stand on a step stool; Dr. Randall stood on two stools stacked together. He nodded to me, and I cut down the middle of our patient's belly, through skin and then dense inches of glistening yellow fat, and we opened the abdomen. Inside, his liver was streaked with fat, too, and his bowel was covered by a thick apron of it, but his stomach looked ordinary—a smooth, grayish-pink bag the size of two fists. We put metal retractors in place to hold the wound open and keep the liver and the slithering loops of bowel out of the way. Working elbow deep, we stapled his stomach down to the size of an ounce. Before the operation, it could accommodate a quart of food and drink; now it would hold no more than a shot glass. We then sewed the opening of this little pouch to a portion of bowel two feet past his duodenum—past the initial portion of the small bowel, where bile and pancreatic juices break food down. This was the bypass part of the operation, and it meant that what food the stomach could accommodate would be less readily absorbed.

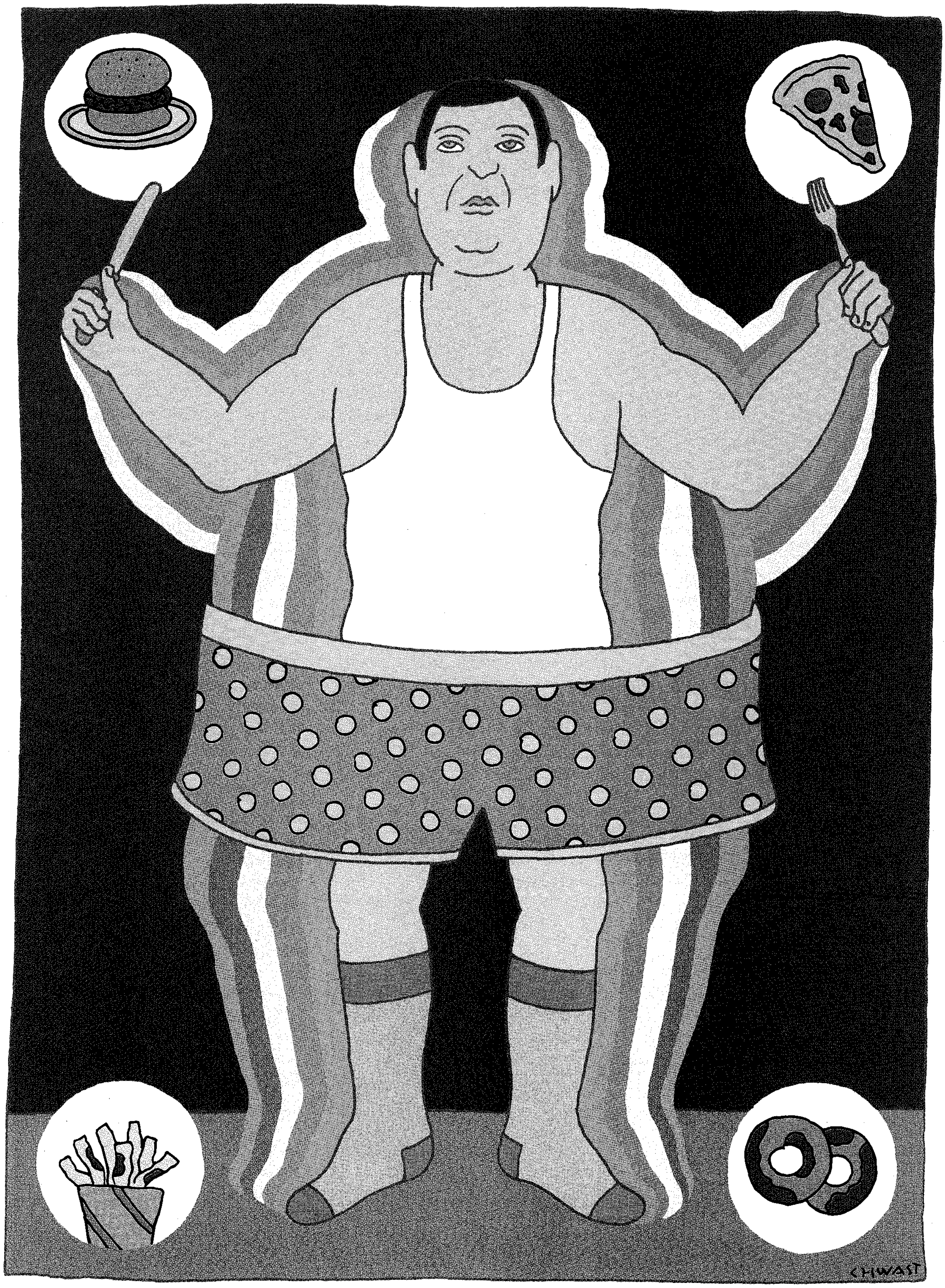
The operation took us a little over two hours. Caselli was stable throughout, but his recovery was difficult. Patients are usually ready to go home three days after surgery; it was two days before Caselli even knew where he was. His kidneys failed for twenty-four hours, and fluid built up in his lungs. He became delirious, seeing things on the walls, pulling off his oxygen mask, his chest leads for the monitors, even yanking out the I.V. We were worried, and his wife and daughters were terrified, but gradually he pulled through.

By the third day after surgery, he was well enough to take sips of clear liquids (water, apple juice, ginger ale), up to one ounce every four hours. On my afternoon rounds, I asked him how he'd done. "O.K.," he said. We began giving him four-ounce servings of Carnation Instant Breakfast for protein and modest calories. He could finish only half, and that took him an hour. It filled him up and, when it did, he felt a sharp, unpleasant pain. This was to be expected, Dr. Randall told him. It would be a few days before he was ready for solid food. But he was doing well. He no longer needed I.V. fluids. And, after he'd had a short stay in a rehabilitation facility, we sent him home.

A couple of weeks later, I asked Dr. Randall how Caselli was getting on. "Just fine," the surgeon said. Although I had done a few of these cases with him, I had not seen how the patients progressed afterward. Would he really lose all that weight? I asked. And how much could he eat? Randall suggested that I see Caselli for myself. So one day that October, I gave him a call, and he invited me to stop by.

Vincent Caselli and his wife live in an unassuming saltbox house not far outside Boston. To get there, I took Route 1, past four Dunkin' Donuts, four pizzerias, three steak houses, two McDonald's, two Ground Rounds, a Taco Bell, a Friendly's, and an International House of Pancakes. (A familiar roadside vista, but that day it seemed a sad tour of our self-destructiveness.) I rang

SEYMOUR CHWAST



Gastric-bypass surgery is designed not to remedy a defect but to circumvent a person's will—and it is soaring in popularity.

the doorbell, and a long minute passed. I heard a slow footfall coming toward the door, and Caselli, visibly winded, opened it. But he smiled broadly when he saw me and gave my hand a warm squeeze. He led me—his hand on table, wall, doorjamb for support—to a seat at a breakfast table in his flowered-wallpaper kitchen.

I asked him how things were going. "Real good," he said. He had no more pain from the operation, the incision had healed, and, though it had been only three weeks, he'd already lost forty pounds. But, at three hundred and ninety, and still stretching his size-64 slacks and size-XXXXXXL T-shirts (the largest he could find at the local big-and-tall store), he did not yet feel different. Sitting, he had to keep his legs apart to let his abdomen sag between them, and the weight of his body on the wooden chair forced him to shift every minute or two because his buttocks would fall asleep. Sweat rimmed the folds of his forehead and made his thin salt-and-pepper hair stick to his pate. His brown eyes were rheumy, above dark bags. He breathed with a disconcerting wheeze.

We talked about his arrival home from the hospital. The first solid food he had tried was a spoonful of scrambled eggs. Just that much, he said, made him so full it hurt, "like something was ripping," and he threw it up. He was afraid that nothing solid would ever go down. But he gradually found that he could tolerate small amounts of soft foods—mashed potatoes, macaroni, even chicken if it was finely chopped and moist. Breads and dry meats, he found, got "stuck," and he'd have to put a finger down his throat and make himself vomit.

Caselli's battle with obesity, he explained, began in his late twenties. "I always had some weight on me," he said—he was two hundred pounds at nineteen, when he married Teresa (as I'll call her), and a decade later he reached three hundred. He would diet and lose seventy-five pounds, then put a hundred back on. By 1985, he weighed four hundred pounds. On one diet, he got down to a hundred and ninety, but he gained it all back. "I must have gained and lost a thousand pounds," he told me. He developed high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. His knees and his back ached all the time, and he had limited mobility. He used to get season tickets to Boston Bruins games, and go out regularly to the track at Seekonk every summer to see the auto racing. Years ago, he drove in races himself. Now he could barely walk to his pickup truck. He hadn't been on an airplane since 1983, and it had been two years since he had been to the second floor of his own house, because he couldn't negotiate the stairs. "Teresa bought a computer a year ago for her office upstairs, and I've never seen it," he told me. He had to move out of their bedroom, upstairs, to a small room off the kitchen. Unable to lie down, he had slept in a recliner ever since. Even so, he could doze only in snatches, because of sleep apnea, which is a common syndrome among the obese and is thought to be related to excessive fat in the tongue and in the soft tissues of the upper airway. Every thirty minutes, his breathing would stop, and he'd wake up asphyxiating. He was perpetually exhausted.

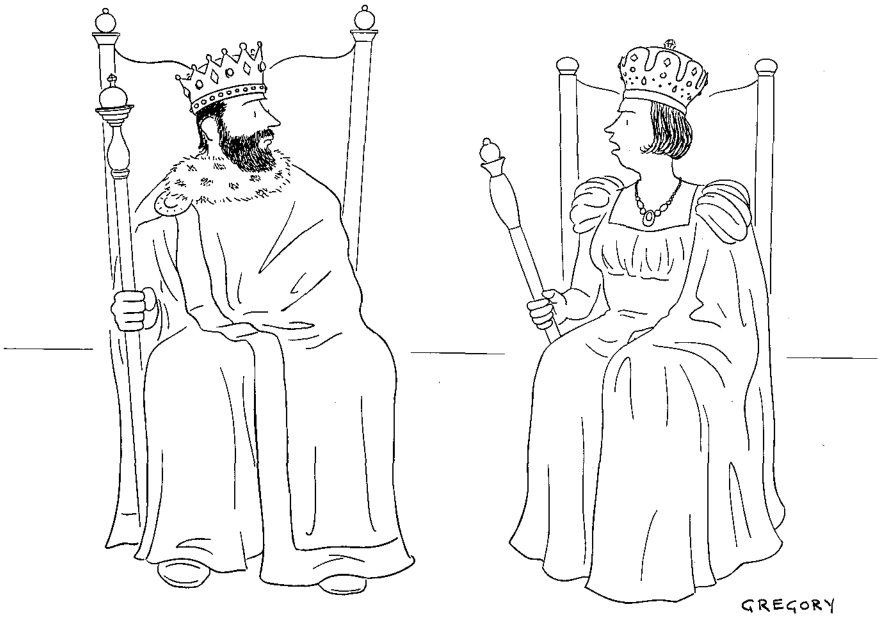
There were other troubles, too, the kind that few people speak about. Good hygiene, he said, was nearly impossible. He could no longer stand up to urinate, and after moving his bowels he often had to shower in order to get clean. Skin folds would become chafed and red, and sometimes develop boils and infections. And, he reported, "Sex life is nonexistent. I have real hopes for it." For him, though, the worst part was his diminishing ability to earn a livelihood.

Vincent Caselli's father had come to Boston from Italy in 1914 to work in construction, and he soon established his own firm. In 1979, Vincent went into business for himself. He was skilled at operating heavy equipment—his specialty was running a Gradall, a thirty-ton, three-hundred-thousand-dollar hydraulic excavator—and he employed a team of men year-round to build roads and sidewalks. Eventually, he owned his own Gradall, a ten-wheel Mack dump truck, a backhoe, and a fleet of pickup trucks. But in the past three years he had become too big to operate the Gradall or keep up with the daily maintenance of the equipment. He had to run the business from his house, and pay others to do the heavy work; he enlisted a nephew to help manage the men and the contracts. Expenses rose, and since he could no longer go around to city halls himself, he found contracts harder to get. If Teresa hadn't had a job—she is the business manager for an assisted-living facility in Boston—they would have gone bankrupt.

Teresa, a freckled redhead, had been pushing him for a long time to diet and

ON COMPANY TIME: A NOVEL

exercise. He, too, wanted desperately to lose weight, but the task of controlling himself, day to day, meal to meal, seemed beyond him. "I'm a man of habits," he told me. "I'm very prone to habits." And eating, he said, was his worst habit. But, then, eating is everyone's habit. What was different about *his* habit? I asked. Well, the portions he took were too big, and he could never leave a crumb on his plate. If there was pasta left in the pot, he'd eat that, too. But why, I wanted to know. Was it that he just loved food? He pondered this question for a moment. It wasn't love, he decided. "Eating felt good instantaneously," he said, "but it only felt good instantaneously." Was it excessive hunger that drove him? "I was never hungry," he said.



"But when a woman has someone's head cut off she's a bitch."

As far as I could tell, Caselli ate for the same reasons that everyone eats: because food tasted good, because it was seven o'clock and time for dinner, because a nice meal had been set out on the table. And he stopped eating for the same reason everyone stops: because he was full and eating was no longer pleasurable. The main difference seemed to be that it took an unusual quantity of food to make him full. (He could eat a large pizza as if it were a canapé.) To lose weight, he faced the same difficult task that every dieter faces—to stop eating before he felt full, while the food still tasted good, and to exercise. These were things that he could do for a little while, and, with some reminding and coaching, for perhaps a bit longer, but they were not, he had found, things that he could do for long. "I am not strong," he said.

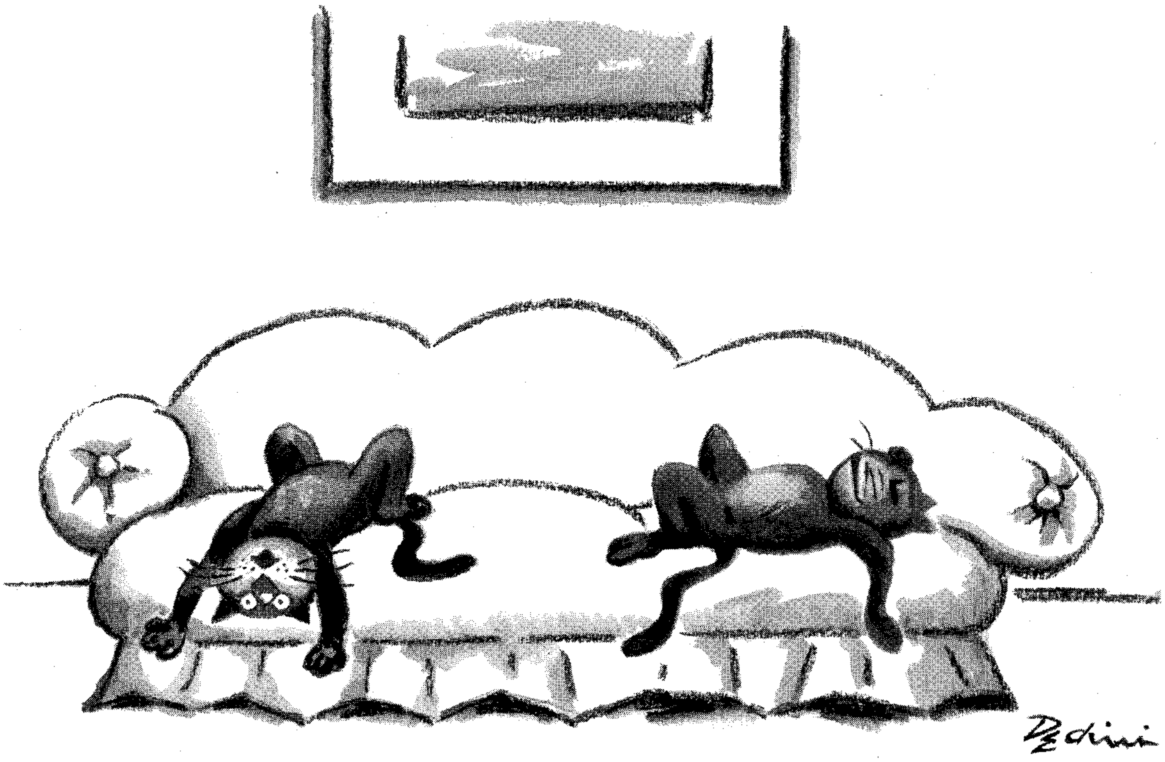
In the spring of 1999, Caselli developed serious infections in both legs: as his weight increased, and varicosities appeared, the skin thinned and broke down, producing open, purulent ulcers. Despite fevers and searing pain, it was only after persistent coaxing from his wife that he finally agreed to see his doctor. The doctor diagnosed a serious case of cellulitis, and he spent a week in the hospital receiving intravenous antibiotics.

At the hospital, he was given an ultrasound scan to check whether blood clots had formed in the deep veins of his legs. A radiologist came to give him the results. Caselli recounted the conversation to me. "He says, 'You don't have blood clots, and I'm really surprised. A guy like you, in the situation you're in, the odds are you're gonna have blood clots. That tells me you're a pretty healthy guy' "—but only, he went on, if Caselli did something about his weight. A little later, the infectious-disease specialist came by to inspect his wounds. "I'm going to tell you something," Caselli recalls the man saying. "I've been reading your whole file—where you were, what you were, how you were. You take that weight off—and I'm not telling you this to bust your ass—you take that weight off and you're a very healthy guy. Your heart is good. Your lungs are good. You're strong."

"I took that seriously," Caselli said. "You know, there are two different doctors telling me this. They don't know me other than what they're reading from their records. They had no reason to tell me this. But they knew the weight was a problem. And if I could get it down somewhere near reality . . ."

When he got home, he remained sick in bed for another two weeks. Meanwhile, his business collapsed. Contracts stopped coming in entirely, and he knew that when his men finished the existing jobs he would have to let them go. Months before, his internist had suggested that he consider surgery and he had dismissed the notion. But he didn't now. He went to see Dr. Randall, who spoke with him frankly about the risks involved. There was a one-in-two-hundred chance of death and a one-in-ten chance of a significant complication, such as bleeding, infection, gastric ulceration, blood clots, or leakage into the abdomen. The doctor also told him that it would change how he ate forever. Unable to work, humiliated, ill, and in pain, Vincent Caselli decided that surgery was his only hope.

It is hard to contemplate the human appetite without wondering if we have any say over our lives at all. We believe in will—in the notion that we have a choice over such simple matters as whether to sit still or stand up, to talk or not talk, to have a slice of pie or not. Yet very few people, whether heavy or slim, can voluntarily reduce their weight for long. The history of weight-loss treatment is one of nearly unremitting failure. Whatever the regimen—liquid diets, high-protein diets, or grapefruit diets, the Zone, Atkins, or Dean Ornish diet—people lose weight quite readily, but they do not keep it off. A 1993 National Institutes of Health expert panel reviewed decades of diet studies and found that between ninety and ninety-five per cent of people regained one-third to two-thirds of any weight lost within a year—and all of it within five



"My God, do you realize the year's half over?"

• •

years. Doctors have wired patients' jaws closed, inflated plastic balloons inside their stomachs, performed massive excisions of body fat, prescribed amphetamines and large amounts of thyroid hormone, even performed neurosurgery to destroy the hunger centers in the brain's hypothalamus—and still people do not keep the weight off. Jaw wiring, for example, can produce substantial weight loss, and patients who ask for the procedure are highly motivated; yet some still take in enough liquid calories through their closed jaws to gain weight, and the others regain it once the wires are removed. We are a species that has evolved to survive starvation, not to resist abundance.

Children are the surprising exception to this history of failure. Nobody would argue that children have more self-control than adults; yet in four randomized studies of obese children between the ages of six and twelve, those who received simple behavioral teaching (weekly lessons for eight to twelve weeks, followed by monthly meetings for up to a year) ended up markedly less overweight ten years later than those who didn't; thirty per cent were no longer obese. Apparently, children's appetites are malleable. Those of adults are not.

There are at least two ways that humans can eat more than they ought to at a sitting. One is by eating slowly but steadily for far too long. This is what people with Prader-Willi syndrome do. Afflicted with a rare inherited dysfunction of the hypothalamus, they are incapable of experiencing satiety. And though they eat only half as quickly as most people, they do not stop. Unless their access to food is strictly controlled (some will eat garbage or pet food if they find nothing else), they become mortally obese.

The more common pattern, however, relies on rapid intake. Human beings are subject to what scientists call a "fat paradox." When food enters your stomach and duodenum (the upper portion of the small intestine), it triggers stretch receptors, protein receptors, and fat receptors that signal the hypothalamus to induce satiety. Nothing stimulates the reaction more quickly than fat. Even a small amount, once it reaches the duodenum, will cause a person to stop eating. Still we eat too much fat. How can this be? It turns out that foods can trigger receptors in the mouth which get the hypothalamus to *accelerate* our intake—and, again, the most potent stimulant is fat. A little bit on the tongue, and the receptors push us to eat fast, before the gut signals shut us down. The tastier the food, the faster we eat—a phenomenon called "the appetizer effect." (This is accomplished, in case you were wondering, not by chewing faster but by chewing less. French researchers have discovered that, in order to eat more and eat it faster, people shorten their "chewing time"—they take fewer "chews per standard food unit" before swallowing. In other words, we gulp.)

Apparently, how heavy one becomes is determined, in part, by how the hypothalamus and the brain stem adjudicate the conflicting signals from the mouth and the gut. Some people feel full quite early in a meal; others, like Vincent Caselli, experience the appetizer effect for much longer. In the past several years, much has been discovered about the mechanisms of this control. We now know, for instance, that hormones, like leptin and neuropeptide Y, rise and fall with fat levels and adjust the appetite accordingly. But our knowledge of these mechanisms is still crude at best.

Consider a 1998 report concerning two men, "BR" and "RH," who suffered from profound amnesia. Like the protagonist in the movie "Memento," they could carry on a coherent conversation with you, but, once they had been distracted, they recalled nothing from as recently as a minute before, not even that they were talking to you. (BR had had a bout of viral encephalitis; RH had had a severe seizure disorder for twenty years.) Paul Rozin, a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, thought of using them in an experiment that would explore the relationship between memory and eating. On three consecutive days, he and his team brought each subject his typical lunch (BR got meat loaf, barley soup, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, bread, butter, peaches, and tea; RH got veal parmigiana with pasta, string beans, juice, and apple crumb cake). Each day, BR ate all his lunch, and RH could not quite finish. Their plates were then taken away. Ten to thirty minutes later, the researchers would reappear with the same meal. "Here's lunch," they would announce. The men ate just as much as before. Another ten to thirty minutes later, the researchers again appeared with the same meal. "Here's lunch," they would say, and again the men would eat. On a couple of occasions, the researchers even offered RH a fourth lunch. Only then did he decline, saying that his "stomach was a little tight." Stomach stretch receptors weren't completely ineffectual. Yet, in the absence of a memory of having eaten, social context alone—someone walking in with lunch—was enough to re-create appetite.

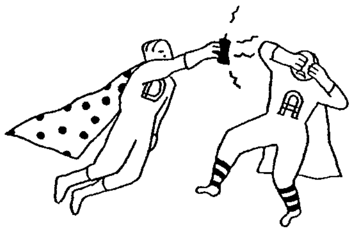
You can imagine forces in the brain vying to make you feel hungry or full. You have mouth receptors, smell receptors, visions of tiramisu pushing one way and gut receptors another. You have leptins and neuropeptides saying you have either too much fat stored or too little. And you have your own social and personal sense of whether eating more is a good idea. If one mechanism is thrown out of whack, there's trouble.

Given the complexity of appetite and our imperfect understanding of it, we shouldn't be surprised that appetite-altering drugs have had only meagre success in making people eat less. (The drug combination of fenfluramine and phentermine, or "fen-phen," had the most success, but it was linked to heart-valve abnormalities and was withdrawn from the market.) University researchers and pharmaceutical companies are searching intensively for a drug that will effectively treat serious obesity. So far, no such drug exists. Nonetheless, one treatment has been found to be effective, and, oddly enough, it turns out to be an operation.

At my hospital, there is a recovery-room nurse who is forty-eight years old and just over five feet tall, with boyish sandy hair and an almost athletic physique. Over coffee one day at the hospital café, not long after my visit with Vincent Caselli, she revealed that she once weighed more than two hundred and fifty pounds. Carla (as I'll call her) explained that she had had gastric-bypass surgery some fifteen years ago.

She had been obese since she was five years old. She started going on diets and taking diet pills—laxatives, diuretics, amphetamines—in junior high school. "It was never a problem losing weight," she said. "It was a problem keeping it off." She remembers how upset she was when, on a trip with friends to Disneyland, she found that she couldn't fit through the entrance turnstile. At the age of thirty-three, she reached two hundred and sixty-five pounds. One day, accompanying her partner, a physician, to a New Orleans medical convention, she found that she was too short of breath to walk down Bourbon Street. For the first time, she said, "I became fearful for my life—not just the quality of it but the longevity of it."

This was 1985. Doctors were experimenting with radical obesity surgery, but there was dwindling enthusiasm for it. Two operations had held considerable promise. One, known as jejunoileal bypass—in which nearly all the small intestine was bypassed, so that only a minimum amount of food could be absorbed—was killing people. The other, stomach stapling, was proving not to be very effective over time; people tended to adapt to the tiny stomach, eating densely caloric foods more and more frequently.



Working in the hospital, however, Carla heard encouraging reports about the gastric-bypass operation—stomach stapling plus a rerouting of the intestine so that food bypassed only the duodenum. She knew that the data about its success was still sketchy, that other operations had failed, but in May of 1986, after a year of thinking about it, she had the surgery.

"For the first time in my life, I experienced fullness," she told me. Six months after the operation, she was down to a hundred and eighty-five pounds. Six months after that, she weighed a hundred and thirty pounds. She lost so much weight that she had to have surgery to remove the aprons of skin that hung from her belly and thighs down to her knees. She was unrecognizable to anyone who had known her before, and even to herself. "I went to bars to see if I could get picked up—and I did," she said. "I always said no," she quickly added, laughing. "But I did it anyway."

The changes weren't just physical, though. She said she felt a profound and unfamiliar sense of will power. She no longer *had* to eat anything: "Whenever I eat, somewhere in the course of that time I end up asking myself, 'Is this good for you? Are you going to put on weight if you eat too much of this?' And I can just stop." She knew, intellectually, that the surgery was why she no longer ate as much as she used to. Yet she felt as if she were choosing not to do it.

Studies report this to be a typical experience of a successful gastric-bypass patient. "I do get hungry, but I tend to think about it more," another woman who had had the operation told me, and she described an internal dialogue very much like Carla's: "I ask myself, 'Do I really need this?' I watch myself." For many, this feeling of control extends beyond eating. They become more confident, even assertive—sometimes to the point of conflict. Divorce rates, for example, have been found to increase significantly after the surgery. Indeed, a few months after her operation, Carla and her partner broke up.

Carla's dramatic weight loss has

proved to be no aberration. Published case series now show that most patients undergoing gastric bypass lose at least two-thirds of their excess weight (generally more than a hundred pounds) within a year. They keep it off, too: ten-year follow-up studies find an average regain of only ten to twenty pounds. And the health benefits are striking: patients are less likely to have heart failure, asthma, or arthritis; eighty per cent of those with diabetes are completely cured of it.

I stopped in to see Vincent Caselli one morning in January of 2000, about four months after his operation. He didn't quite spring to the door, but he wasn't winded this time. The bags under his eyes had shrunk. His face was more defined. Although his midriff was vast, it seemed smaller, less of a sack.

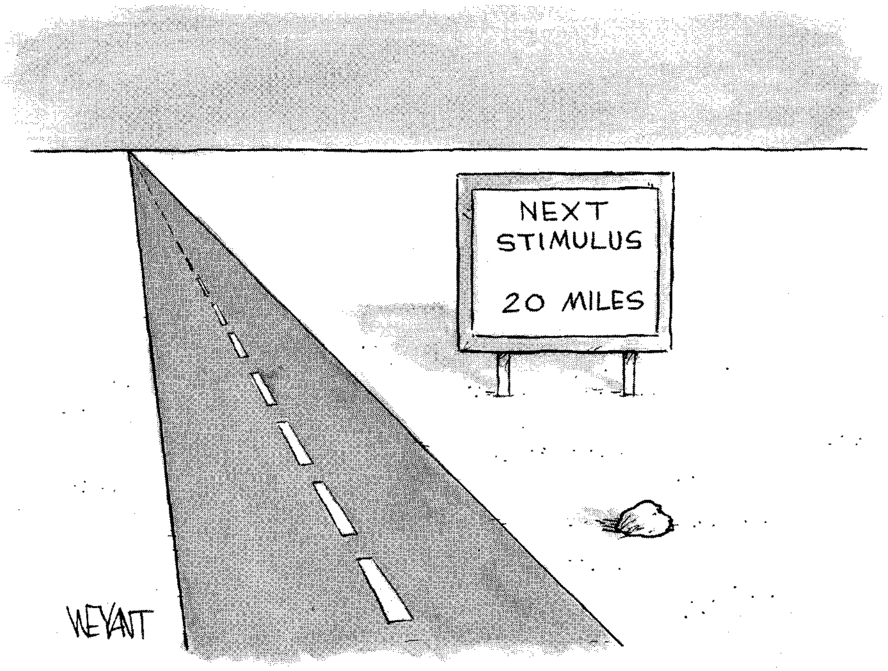
He told me that he weighed three hundred and forty-eight pounds—still far too much for a man who was only five feet seven inches tall, but ninety pounds less than he weighed on the operating table. And it had already made a difference in his life. Back in October, he told me, he missed his youngest daughter's wedding because he couldn't manage the walking required to get to the church. But by December he had lost enough weight to resume going to his East Dedham garage every morning. "Yesterday, I unloaded three tires off the truck," he said. "For me to do that three months ago? There's no way." He had climbed the stairs of his house for the first time since 1997. "One day around Christmastime, I say to myself, 'Let me try this. I gotta try this.' I went very slow, one foot at a time." The second floor was nearly unrecognizable to him. The bathroom had been renovated since he last saw it, and Teresa had, naturally, taken over the bedroom, including the closets. He would move back up eventually, he said, though it might be a while. He still had to sleep sitting up in a recliner, but he was sleeping in four-hour stretches now—"Thank God," he said. His diabetes was gone. And although he was still unable to stand up longer than twenty minutes, his leg ulcers were gone, too. He lifted his pants legs to show me. I noticed that he was wearing regular Red Wing work boots—in the past, he had to cut slits along the sides of his shoes in order to fit into them.

"I've got to lose at least another hundred pounds," he said. He wanted to be able to work, pick up his grandchildren, buy clothes off the rack at Filenes, go places without having to ask himself, "Are there stairs? Will I fit in the seats? Will I run out of breath?" He was still eating like a bird. The previous day, he'd had nothing all morning, a morsel of chicken with some cooked carrots and a small roast potato for lunch, and for dinner one fried shrimp, one teriyaki chicken strip, and two forkfuls of chicken-and-vegetable lo mein from a Chinese restaurant. He was starting up the business again, and, he told me, he'd gone out for a business lunch one day recently. It was at a new restaurant in Hyde Park—"beautiful"—and he couldn't help ordering a giant burger and a plate of fries. Just two bites into the burger, though, he had to stop. "One of the fellas says to me, 'Is that all you're going to eat?' And I say, 'I can't eat any more.' 'Really?' I say, 'Yeah, I can't eat any more. That's the truth.' "

I noticed, however, that the way he spoke about eating was not the way Carla had spoken. He did not speak of stopping because he wanted to. He spoke of stopping because he had to. You want to eat more, he explained, but "you start to get that feeling in your insides that one more bite is going to push you over the top." Still, he often took that bite. Overcome by waves of nausea, pain, and bloating—the so-called dumping syndrome—he'd have to vomit. If there were a way to eat more, he would. This scared him, he admitted. "It's not right," he said.

Three months later, in April, Caselli invited me and my son to stop by his garage in East Dedham. My son was four years old and, as Vince remembered my once saying, fascinated with all things mechanical. The garage was huge, cavernous, with a two-story roll-up door and metal walls painted yellow. There, in the shadows, was Vince's beloved Gradall, a handsome tank of a machine, as wide as a county road, painted yield-sign yellow, with shiny black tires that came up to my chest and his company name emblazoned in curlicue script along its flanks. On the chassis, six feet off the ground, was a glass-enclosed control cab and a thirty-foot telescoping boom, mounted on a three-hundred-and-sixty-degree swivel. Vince and a friend of his, a fellow heavy-equipment contractor I'll call Danny, were sitting on metal folding chairs in a sliver of sunlight, puffing fat Honduran cigars, silently enjoying the day. They both rose to greet us. Vince introduced me as "one of the doctors who did my stomach operation."

I let my son go off to explore the equipment and asked Vince how his business was going. Not well, he said. Except for a few jobs in late winter plow-



ing snow for the city in his pickup truck, he had brought in no income since the previous August. He'd had to sell two of his three pickup trucks, his Mack dump truck, and most of the small equipment for road building. Danny came to his defense. "Well, he's been out of action," he said. "And you see we're just coming into the summer season. It's a seasonal business." But we all knew that wasn't the issue.

Vince told me that he weighed about three hundred and twenty pounds. This was about thirty pounds less than when I had last seen him, and he was proud of that. "He don't eat," Danny said. "He eats half of what I eat." But Vince was still unable to climb up into the Gradall and operate it. And he was beginning to wonder whether that would ever change. The rate of weight loss was slowing down, and he noticed that he was able to eat more. Before, he could eat only a couple of bites of a burger, but now he could sometimes eat half of one. And he still found himself eating more than he could handle. "Last week, Danny and this other fellow, we had to do some business," he said. "We had Chinese food. Lots of days, I don't eat the right stuff—I try to do what I can do, but I ate a little bit too much. I had to bring Danny back to Boston College, and before I left the parking lot there I just couldn't take it anymore. I had to vomit.

"I'm finding that I'm getting back into that pattern where I've always got to eat," he went on. His gut still stopped him, but he was worried. What if one day it didn't? He had heard about people whose staples gave way, returning their stomach to its original size, or who managed to put the weight back on in some other way.

I tried to reassure him. I told him what I knew Dr. Randall had already told him during a recent appointment: that a small increase in the capacity of his stomach pouch was to be expected, and that what he was experiencing seemed normal. But could something worse happen? I didn't want to say.

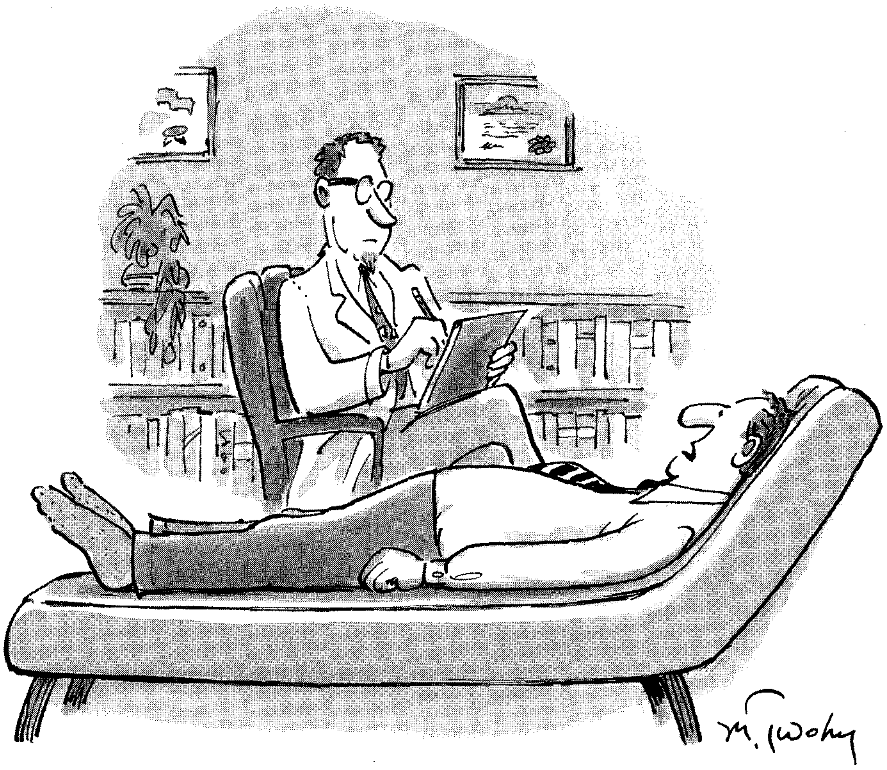
MARISA ACOCELLA

"I'm pretty sure she's rich—she never has any money."

Among the gastric-bypass patients I had talked with was a man whose story remains a warning and a mystery to me. He was forty-two years old, married, and had two daughters, both of whom were single mothers with babies and still lived at home, and he had been the senior computer-systems manager for a large local company. At the age of thirty-eight, he had had to retire and go on disability because his weight—which had been above three hundred pounds since high school—had increased to more than four hundred and fifty pounds and was causing unmanageable back pain. He was soon confined to his home. He could not walk half a block. He could stand for only brief periods. He went out, on average, once a week, usually for medical appointments. In December, 1998, he had a gastric bypass. By June of the following year, he had lost a hundred pounds.

Then, as he put it, "I started eating again." Pizzas. Boxes of sugar cookies. Packages of doughnuts. He found it hard to say how, exactly. His stomach was still tiny and admitted only a small amount of food at a time, and he experienced the severe nausea and pain that gastric-bypass patients get whenever they eat sweet or rich things. Yet his drive was stronger than ever. "I'd eat right through pain—even to the point of throwing up," he told me. "If I threw up, it was just room for more. I would eat straight through the day." He did not pass a waking hour without eating something. "I'd just shut the bedroom door. The kids would be screaming. The babes would be crying. My wife would be at work. And I would be eating." His weight returned to four hundred and fifty pounds, and then more. The surgery had failed. And his life had been shrunk to the needs of pure appetite.

He is among the five to twenty per cent of patients—the published reports conflict on the exact number—who



"My physical therapist says this is the worst possible position you can lie in."

• •

regain weight despite gastric-bypass surgery. (When we spoke, he had recently submitted to another, more radical gastric bypass, in the desperate hope that something would work.) In these failures, one begins to grasp the power that one is up against. An operation that makes overeating both extremely difficult and extremely unpleasant—which, for more than eighty per cent of patients, is finally sufficient to cause appetite to surrender and be transformed—can sometimes be defeated after all. Studies have yet to uncover a single consistent risk factor for this outcome. It could, apparently, happen to anyone.

It was a long time before I saw Vince Caselli again. Earlier this year, I called him to ask about getting together, and he suggested that we go out to see a Boston Bruins game. A few days later, he picked me up at the hospital in his rumbling Dodge Ram. For the first time, he looked almost small in the outsized truck. He was down to about two hundred and fifty pounds. "I'm still no Gregory Peck," he said, but he was now one of the crowd—chubby, in an ordinary way. The rolls beneath his chin were gone. His face had a shape. His middle no longer rested between his legs. And, almost a year and a half after the surgery, he was still losing weight. At the FleetCenter, where the Bruins play, he walked up the escalator without getting winded. Our tickets were taken at the gate—the Bruins were playing the Pittsburgh Penguins—and we walked through the turnstiles. Suddenly, he stopped and said, "Look at that. I went right through, no problem. I never would have made it through there before." It was the first time he'd gone to an event like this in years.

We took our seats about two dozen rows up from the ice, and he laughed a little about how easily he fit. The seats were as tight as coach class, but he was quite comfortable. (I, with my long legs, was the one who had trouble finding room.) Vince was right at home here. He had been a hockey fan his whole life, and could supply me with all the details: the Penguins' goalie Garth Snow was a local boy from Wrentham and a friend of one of Vince's cousins; Joe Thornton and Jason Allison were the Bruins' best forwards, but neither could hold a candle to the Penguins' Mario Lemieux. There were nearly twenty thousand people at the game, but within ten minutes Vince had found a friend from his barbershop sitting just a few rows away.

The Bruins won, and we left cheered and buzzing. Afterward, we went out to dinner at a grill near the hospital. Vince told me that his business was finally up and running. He could operate the Gradall without difficulty, and he'd had full-time Gradall work for the past three months. He was even thinking of buying a new model. At home, he had moved back upstairs. He and Teresa had taken a vacation in the Adirondacks; they were going out evenings, and visiting their grandchildren.

I asked him what had changed since I saw him the previous spring. He could not say precisely, but he gave me an example. "I used to love Italian cookies, and I still do," he said. A year ago, he would have eaten to the point of nausea. "But now they're, I don't know, they're too sweet. I eat one now, and after one or two bites I just don't want it." It was the same with pasta, which had always been a problem for him. "Now I can have a bite and I'm satisfied."

Partly, it appeared that his taste in food had changed. He pointed to the nachos and buffalo wings and hamburgers on the menu, and said that, to his surprise, he no longer felt like eating any of them. "It seems like I lean toward protein and vegetables nowadays," he said, and he ordered a chicken Caesar salad. But he also no longer felt the need to stuff himself. "I used to be real reluctant to push food away," he told me. "Now it's just—it's different." But when did this happen? And how? He shook his head. "I wish I could pinpoint it for you," he said. He paused to consider. "As a human, you adjust to conditions. You don't think you are. But you are."

These days, it isn't the failure of obesity surgery that is prompting concerns but its success. Physicians have gone from scorning it to encouraging, sometimes imploring, their most severely overweight patients to undergo a gastric-bypass operation. That's not a small group. More than five million adult Americans meet the strict definition of morbid obesity. (Their "body mass index"—that is, their weight in kilograms divided by the square of their height in metres—is forty or more, which for an average man is roughly a hundred pounds or more overweight.) Ten million more weigh just under the mark but may nevertheless have obesity-related health problems that are serious enough to warrant the surgery. There are ten times as many candidates for obesity surgery right now as there are for heart-bypass surgery in a year. So many patients are seeking the procedure that established surgeons cannot keep up. The American Society of Bariatric Surgery has only five hundred members nationwide who perform gastric-bypass operations, and their waiting lists are typically months long. Hence the too familiar troubles associated with new and lucrative surgical techniques (the fee can be as much as twenty thousand dollars): newcomers are stampeding to the field, including many who have proper training but have not yet mastered the procedure, and others who have no training at all. Complicating matters further, individual surgeons are promoting a slew of variations on the standard operation which haven't been fully researched—the "duodenal switch," the "long limb" bypass, the laparoscopic bypass. And a few surgeons are pursuing new populations, such as adolescents and people who are only moderately obese.

Perhaps what's most unsettling about the soaring popularity of gastric-bypass surgery, however, is simply the world that surrounds it. Ours is a culture in which fatness is seen as tantamount to failure, and get-thin-quick promises—whatever the risks—can have an irresistible allure. Doctors may recommend the operation out of concern for their patients' health, but the stigma of obesity is clearly what drives many patients to the operating room. "How can you let yourself look like that?" is society's sneering, unspoken question, and often its spoken one as well. Women suffer even more than men from the social sanction, and it's no accident that seven times as many women as men have had the operation. (Women are only an eighth more likely to be obese.)

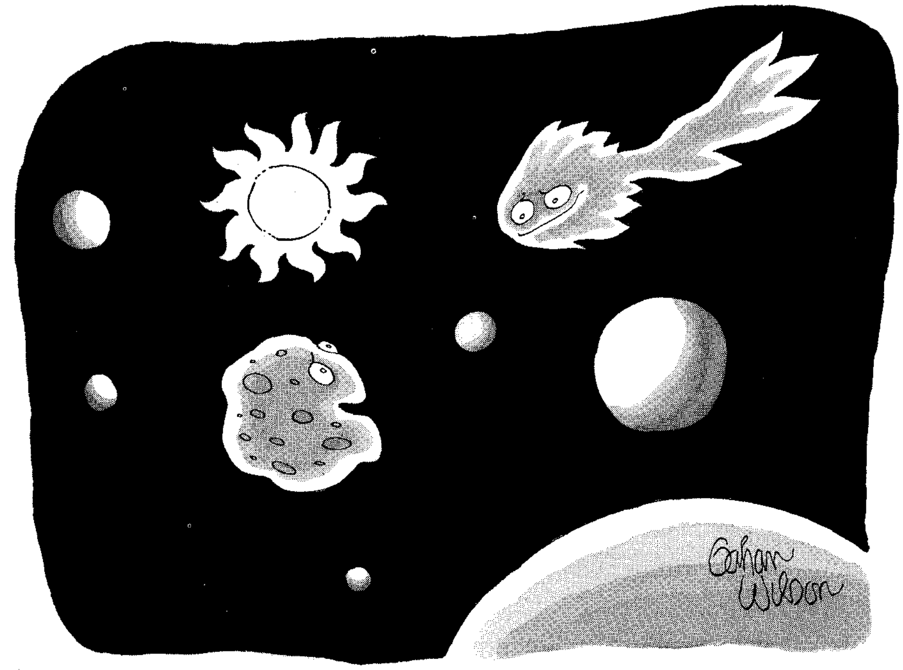
Indeed, deciding *not* to undergo the surgery, if you qualify, is at risk of being considered the unreasonable thing to do. A three-hundred-and-fifty-pound woman who did not want the operation told me of doctors browbeating her for her choice. And I have learned of at least one patient with heart disease being refused treatment by a doctor unless she had a gastric bypass. If you don't have the surgery, you will die, some doctors tell their patients. But we actually do not know this. Despite the striking improvements in weight and health, studies have not yet proved a corresponding reduction in mortality.

There are legitimate grounds for being wary of the procedure. As Paul Ernsberger, an obesity researcher at Case Western Reserve University, pointed out to me, many patients undergoing gastric bypass are in their twenties and thirties. "But is this really going to be effective and worthwhile over a forty-year span?" he asked. "No one can say." He was concerned about the possible long-term effects of nutritional deficiencies (for which patients are instructed to take a daily multivitamin). And he was concerned about evidence from rats that raises the possibility of an increased risk of bowel cancer.

We want progress in medicine to be clear and unequivocal, but of course it rarely is. Every new treatment has gaping unknowns—for both patients and society—and it can be hard to decide what to do about them. Perhaps a simpler, less radical operation will prove effective for obesity. Perhaps the long-sought satiety pill will be found. Nevertheless, the gastric bypass is the one thing we have now that works. Not all the questions have been answered, but there are more than a decade of studies behind it. And so we forge ahead. Hospitals everywhere are constructing obesity-surgery centers, ordering reinforced operating tables, training surgeons and staff. At the same time, everyone expects that, one day, something new and better will be discovered that will make what we're now doing obsolete.

Across from me, in our booth at the grill, Vince Caselli pushed his chicken Caesar salad aside only half eaten. "No taste for it," he said, and he told me he was grateful for that. The operation, he said, had given him his life back. But, after one more round of drinks, it was clear that he still felt uneasy.

"I had a serious problem and I had to take serious measures," he said. "I think I had the best technology that is available at this point. But I do get concerned: Is this going to last my whole life? Someday, am I going to be right back to square one—or worse?" He fell silent for a moment, gazing into his glass. "Well, that's the cards that God gave me. I can't worry about stuff I can't control." ♦



"Welcome to the Cirque du Soleil!"

FICTION

GIGANTIC

BY MARC NESBITT

At the zoo, I park by banging my axle against the curb and hope I can back the car out later. I have a laminated pass with my face and name on it which clips to my pocket and grants me a key to every cage.

I work at a University Thrift Zoo just south of Baltimore. We get secondhand animals from city zoos and "wildlife parks." There the rhinos and zebras get wide fields of dirt; all the cages are oversized, walls hand-painted to each natural habitat's specifications.

Here the cinder block is asylum manila and the animals lick the bars where thrown food has smashed. Here we have a sluggish boa, digesting a tumor. Seals on climate-controlled plastic ice. We've got a tiger with green gums. This is where they put the retarded creatures and criminals—animals doing penance for something they committed when they were human.

Sign on the polar bears' open-air vivarium says, "Quiet! Bears sleeping!" Kids hang on the rail, spit in the pool; wait for days to see bears that have long since been hauled away on flatbeds, under tarps, for burial out by the quarry.

The rhesus monkeys are the property of the Psychology Department—all the primates are, actually—hair falling out, patches of pale-pink skin, always throwing one another through tires or trying to rip their own ears off.

I rake dead bats from the hay floor of the bat cage and throw them in a black plastic bag. Later I'll take them to the Dumpster and still no one'll be able to explain why the bats keep dropping like fruit or why they have hay in a bat cage in the first place. I pick up a sign that says, "Quiet! _______ sleeping!," slip in the "Bats" panel, and place it up front, where all the kids can see it.

An hour till we open, I go see our one elephant, Clarice. She's already out and stamping through beige pebbles small as gallstones, testing her feet. When it rains she's kept caged for days—pacing the same figure eight, scraping the walls on her turns. Now she stands gigantic in the morning with a scab on her forehead thick as a tree trunk.

I blow through my lips, raise an arm, do a horrible impression of her species. She trumpets. We repeat this until she realizes I don't have food. She reaches beneath her feet, picks up a rock and throws it to me. I put it in my pocket and blow her a kiss.

I walk back past the hippo in his dirty little bathtub to see Dewey digging a ditch behind the Dumpsters.

"What died?" I say.

"This whole fucking zoo if you'd give it a minute. Place is a shit hole." Dewey's a white boy, sweating and powdered with dirt.

"Look what Clarice gave me."

"That a tooth?" Dewey says.

"It's a rock."

"Same thing."

The university owns this place, but Dewey's Uncle Don runs it, which means whenever Don wants to say anything he waits for the professor-of-the-day to come stick a hand up his ass and make him speak.

Dewey works here only in the summers, in no official capacity; mostly he walks around getting high and talking to the animals, occasionally burying whatever died last night. The rest of the year, he's a terrible student at the university and smokes his entire allowance. He's got blond dreads with rings, beads, and seashells, greasy dandruff caught in the roots. First week I worked here, he said, "The moon might have cool booths and cheap drinks, but the earth's got *atmosphere*," and I've listened to less than half of what he's said ever since. That was two years ago.

"So what's dead now?" I say.

"D'you do those bats, Fiddy?" he asks me.

"They're right here," I say, holding up the bag I've still got with me.

"My dog," he says, points his shovel at the lumped beach towel next to his leg.

"He was sick."

"Not anymore."

Dewey's dog was a zoo favorite and free to wander the grounds; even Don didn't care. The dog was a bull terrier that smiled when it panted and made kids laugh—they'd pet him, giggle, drop ice cream and French fries on his back. Never once barked or so much as growled. The thing had been skinny to begin with, but for a while now would throw up everything he ate, right on the zoo path, staggering through the crowds. Wasting away right in front of us; nothing we could do about it. Wasn't like the dog didn't eat. We'd catch him in the Dumpsters at least twice a day, pull him out by the collar, Dewey smacking his ass with that same shovel.

"I can't believe Brutus is dead."

"Brewster," he says.

"Isn't that what I said?"

Dewey rubs his forehead and stares at the dirt paste in his hand.

"Well, I still can't believe he's dead," I say.

"Believe it," he says. "You can check for yourself." He pokes the towel a couple of times and we wait for it to move. "See?"

"I see a hole without a dog," Uncle Don says, appearing suddenly in a baby-blue sweatsuit, fat and slightly mafioso. His hair's Grecian, curly and kelplike. He's shiny. Olive oil for sunblock. "I see two thumbs in two asses and everybody wondering where their hands went."

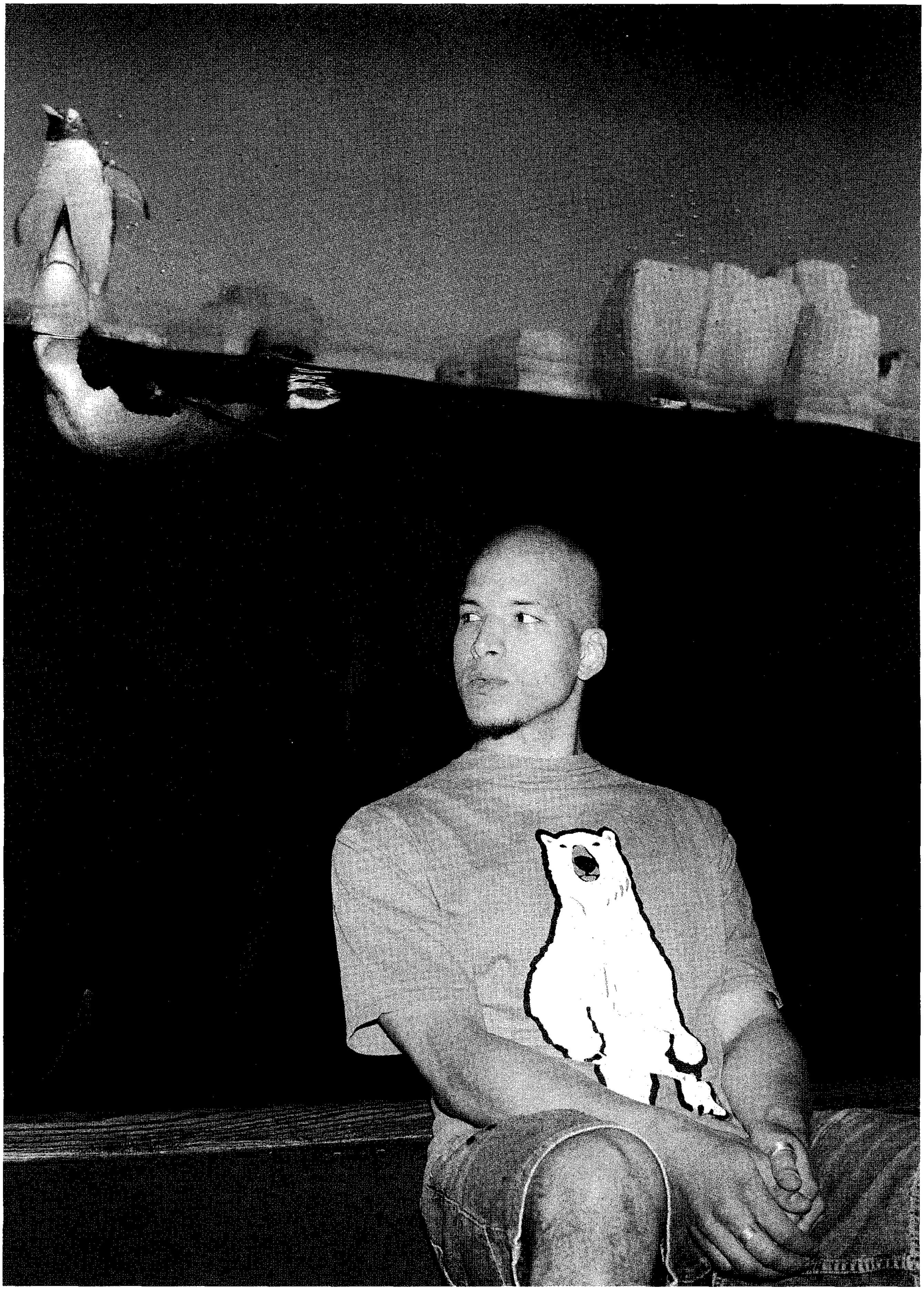
Dewey kicks the corpse and towel into the hole. It takes a few tries.

"What's in the bag?" Don asks me.

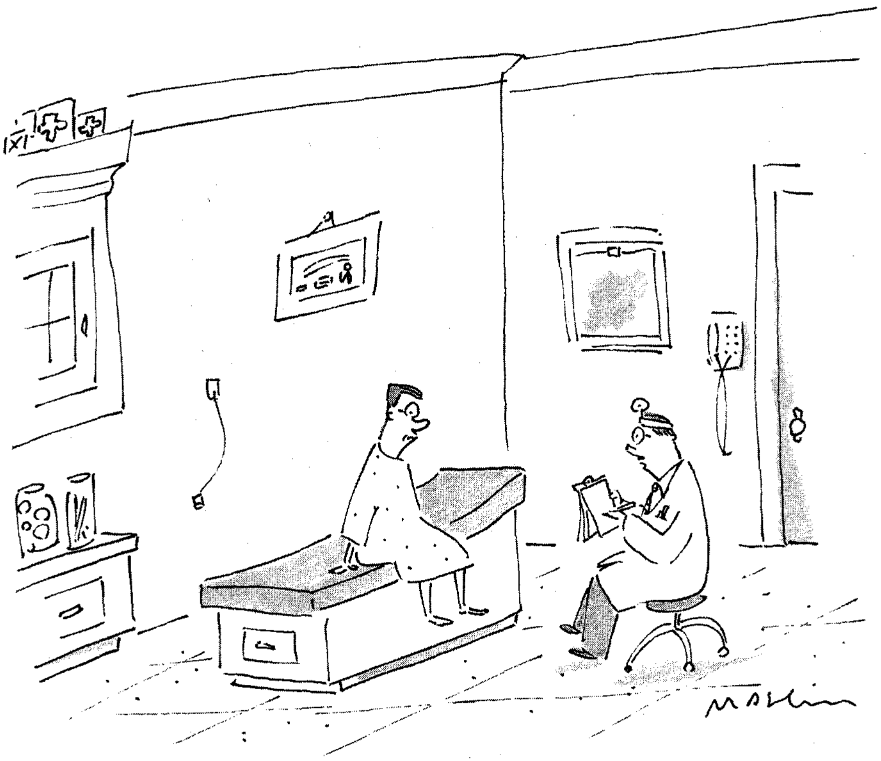
"Cafeteria trash," I say.

"Then why's it moving?"

"Goddam rats," I say, drop the bag to



Marc Nesbitt at the Central Park Zoo. Photograph by Katharina Bosse.



"I'm going to take you off news weeklies and put you on a steady diet of shelter magazines."

the ground and step on the part that's squirming.

Don holds up his hands like he just bought them. He says, "One of the Psych freaks told me they found pot plants in the gorilla compound."

Dewey stops throwing dirt with the ditch half filled. Puts his foot on the shovel blade and says, "They?"

I say, "Compound?"

"You ever heard of gorillas?" Don says. "Know where we keep 'em? Well. In there. The only people with keys besides me and the Psych Department are you two."

"And . . . ," Dewey says.

"So . . . ," Don says.

"Wasn't me," I say.

"I haven't accused anybody yet."

But Dewey and I have, sneering at each other like we're losing at charades. "Maybe it just grew wild," Dewey says. "Maybe they brought seeds over in their fur. Like bees, maybe."

Don says, "It had an electric fence around it."

Dewey points the shovel at me. "Then Fiddy did it."

"He called your zoo a shit hole," I say.

Dewey looks at his uncle and asks who he's going to believe, but Don's staring right at me. "What'll the Psychology people think?" he wants to know, furious, with his pulse in his face.

Fired from the zoo at two in the afternoon and now I have nothing to do. I head for a bar in the city. I just called Max, someone I know who'll drink during daylight hours. Most people drink until they're twenty-five—some ride it out to thirty. The rest of us turn pro. I'm having a terrible year and the fans are against me.

I smoke outside the bar, flick sparks on passing dogs behind their walkers' backs. Trees unfold from mulch under sewer grates. I'm feeling sorry for myself, stench like a kennel, when up walks Max: sag-eyed white kid, skinny as a cartoon chicken singing Bing Crosby. There's blood on his T-shirt; on his neck six inches of insect-black stitches. "Just ran into the woman I love," he says.

"That how you got that gash?" I say.

"In a way. I mean, I was walking around staring at the hooks in the ceiling of the tire warehouse where I'm temping—yeah, I don't know, that's why I'm staring—and I come out from one of those four-story pallet alleys and I fucking drill her. Not literally or nothing like that, just ran right into her and knocked off her hard hat. I'm holding her arms so she won't fall, you know, 'cause women like that sort of thing. I mean, I had her *elbows* in my *hands* and I say—wait, what'd I say, oh yeah—I say, 'Excuse me,' and this forklift swings around, almost lops my head off."

"What'd she say?"

"Couldn't hear her. 'Cause of the forklift." We both squint down the street at heat rising out of the sidewalk.

He and I always have these stories. Finally get introduced to a girl and puke under the table. Or she disappears in the parking lot with her ex-boyfriend, half an hour into your first date. "Maybe you didn't miss anything," I say. "Maybe she didn't even open her mouth."

He stretches his neck so you can see the thread pulling on the skin. He says, "It's worse than it looks. I mean better." He's got on surgeon-green pants he stole from Emergency. "These aren't even mine," he says, and he might mean the pants or the blood spots.

Max and I are friends because we're afraid to drink alone. In public, anyway. We're like a guy and his CPR dummy so he can drive in the car-pool lane. We alternate roles.

In the bar, after the door shuts, it takes at least a minute to see shapes. Another minute to see the whole place: a salmon cinder-block pit with no windows; every inch of wall holds a beer mirror and it's smoky even when it's empty.

Or almost empty. Albert the resident regular sits at the rail end in his fedora, newspaper-gray skin, drinking Jack-and-Tab and stabbing empty soda cans with a pen. Smoke's coming from the neck of his ancient suit.

Max says, "Hey, Albert, you dead yet?"

Albert points a two-finger pistol with a lit cigarette in its tips, says in a voice you could sharpen rocks with, "What's with the neck, Frankenstein? You kill somebody?"

"Forklift at that place I was temping. You know how it is."

"Lucky it ain't cut your juggler."

"Plus I got a pair of pants."

I pull out money, say, "You probably want another one, don't you, Albert?"

"Don't lecture me, motherfucker."

Rufus the bartender is big enough to count as a couple in the census and black as his weight in coffee beans. He's got the floor raised so he can roll in front of the liquor on a three-wheel stool. He shifts his mass in his yellow windbreaker like a rhino trapped in a tent. He's on the phone. "I'm on the phone," he says to us. On television, they've got tarps on the Kansas City infield; players sit in dugouts and spit through the rain.

Rufus sets the phone down, announces, "I'm having a kid!" Arms up like touchdown.

"No, you're not. You're just fat. Now bring us some drinks," Max says.

"Hey, Fiddy," Rufus says to me. "Why you always hang out with white boys?"

I shrug.

Rufus says, "Betchugotta cracker bitch, too."

"I'm bitchless."

"Betchu," Rufus says. Hand up his jacket, rubbing sweat from under one of his breasts.

Max thinks he's a poet. He sets his manuscript on the bar, cover page tie-dyed by food stains. Title: "Midget's in My Attic." "I'm thinking about taking out the apostrophe," he says.

"You should leave it," I say.

He flips to a page near the back. "Read this one," he says. He's got his hand in my shirt pocket, wrestling a pack of cigarettes. "Hey, Rufus, you here again?" he says. "You're a goddam workaholic."

"What's that make you?" Rufus asks.

"My point exactly."

The poem's called "Smelt Night." The first line: "Cheap wine always brings the roaches out of hiding."

Rufus stares at the television, rolls in the back of his neck like a pack of black hot dogs. He says, "So, seriously, guys, Gina's having a baby."

"Well, why the hell didn't you say so in the first place?" Max says. "You *know* what this calls for, Rufus. A celebration. Shots around the bar! All—wait—one, two, four of us! Hook it up, my man. And that's countin' you, Señor, so make yourself one while you're at it."

"Thanks for permission," Rufus says. He gives us sewage-beige shots spilling from rocks glasses.

"To the soon-to-be father!" Max stands on his stool now. "Please, God, let it be a girl!" and we all scream, even Rufus. Max downs his glass, shudders and winces, puts his head in his arms, and doesn't talk for a few minutes. My friend the manual-labor temp. He'd work the worst shifts you ever heard of, then take a week off to drink.

I'd actually liked my job. On good days I felt like I was keeping the animals alive, even if only for another week, before they got chucked in the Dumpster or loaded onto trucks by crane.

I pull the rock from my pocket, turn it over in my fingers. It's perfectly smooth and the size of a miniature ear. First thing an animal ever gave me that didn't leave a scar. I'll miss Clarice. She made my mornings, shaking her head in the sun. That's why I liked that place: this rock, her enormous head. The tiger on its back, tongue out, letting me hose the dirt off its belly. I should've brought Clarice birthday cakes every day, hand-fed her gourmet lettuce.

Then I remember her lying on her side, wailing in her cage, and think maybe I should have mercy-killed her before I left. Should've done the monkeys, too, for that matter. I'd need a giant blade—a scimitar, maybe, machete even, some one-stroke stuff. Gas pellets in the ventilation shafts, poisonous vegetables.

I had promised myself one cigarette per drink, but after a few doubles the world sped up, and by now I had two cigarettes left in what had been a fresh pack and I'd lost count of my drinks. I'd tipped Rufus obscenely and he'd yet to throw me a buyback.

Max is up again and yammering next to me. "I don't care," he says to Albert. "Just don't give me a job where every day I might die. Like the President. Or a stewardess."

Albert says, "Yeah. What else?"

"Keeping busy," Max says. "Trying to juggle two chicks at once."

"Two?"

"At the same time."

Albert says, "That ain't juggling, man. You're just passing your balls from hand to hand."

On TV the rain delay's over; a player tomahawks a bat at the kid who collects

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bats. Bleacher people throw food into the bullpen.

Bar's suddenly packed for happy hour—two blocks from Camden Yards, and the Orioles have a game at seven. Rufus sliding like a maniac, sparks on his wheels.

"How long we been here?" I ask nobody.

"Three hours," they answer.

The place is crowded now to the point of freakish: people hanging from the rafters, popping out of one another's backs, growing from puddles on the bar.

Through the suits and smoke, Dewey comes through the door, still in his zoo jumpsuit. He grabs the stool next to me—him on one side, a nearly passed-out Max on the other, me staring at three shelves of liquor posing for their all-star photo.

Dewey says, "Dude." I take this to mean he's speaking seriously. "I feel super bad about what happened."

"Who the fuck is this guy?" Max asks. "Hey. Hey you. Nice hair. Close your eyes before you bleed to death." He's standing next to me, eagerly spinning his barstool like a kid's riding on it. Much as I despise Max sometimes, he and I are soul mates compared to anything I feel for Dewey.

"I didn't know my uncle'd fire you, Fiddy," Dewey says. "I so had no idea."

"D'you think about what he *might* do?" I say.

He thinks about it, says, "I'll admit I never got that far."

Max wipes whiskey on twenties and wallpapers his forehead.

Behind me someone screams, "*Hey, barkeep, that's the fourth dolla ya fuckin' jukebox tooka mine!*"

Rufus says, "Then stop putting money in it!"

Dewey gives me a shark tooth on a leather shoelace and a Buddhist prayer bracelet with mood beads. He's been quiet and slightly weepy, and now with the gifts it feels like a breakup. If I'd just take them it'd make him feel better. He says he'll buy me a drink.

I point to the drink I have, push it over on the bar. "Second thought, I will take one. Him, too." The stool next to me's empty; Max is in back screaming at the pay phone.

"What's he drink?" Dewey says.

"Wet stuff. Not a lot of ice."

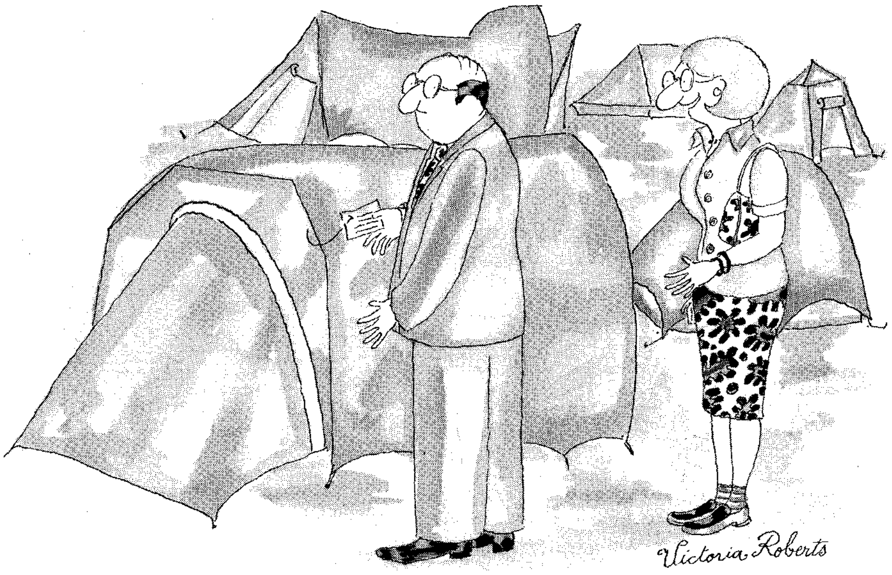
Dewey keeps staring at his hands on his knees like he just heard his dog died. He says, "I didn't mean . . . ," and, "But I just . . . "

"You just. Just came all the way down here to give me beads, that's what you just."

"And a shark tooth. And to get your badge."

"Point being: fuck you very much, Dewey, I don't want the shark tooth. I found it by the food court and gave it to you. If I wanted it, I'da kept it."

Max spilled his last drink, so when he comes back and sits down he leaves his new one on the bar, leans over and takes it from the straw. The prayer beads are going from black to blood red to deep-sea green, right there against my glass.



"Buying a tent won't make you a camper, Arthur.
It will, however, make you a shopper."

"I'll take these beads, though," I say.

"I found those," Dewey says.

"Your girlfriend gave you this bracelet. I was there."

"They change color according to your karma."

"That's exactly what she said," I say.

"So, your badge."

"I'm what?"

"Your pass," he says. "That little thing that lets you in the zoo every morning. I need it back."

"My pass . . . ," I say, so slowly I hope he leaves before I finish. I tried to burn my pass earlier, but the lamination stank so much I gave up. Now it's curled in my pocket, black-brown and half the size it used to be.

Dewey still sits there. Everyone else in the bar races their drinks to their faces, glancing side-eyed like a pie-eating contest.

"Here it is," I say, hold it up hidden in my fist, accidentally throw it on the floor on purpose. I say to his back, as he's bent over, "Anyway, my friend and I were just leaving."

Max says, "Who. Me?"

We head home in silence. I have drunk concentric thoughts and serious trouble with gravity. Max so loaded he walks like his shoulder's separated. We take to a curb in the Camden Yards parking lot; watch minivans wander the aisles, late for the game. Even from here, you can see bugs cloud the stadium floodlights and listen to the loud hollow crowd noise like a riot in a tunnel.

A cop rolls up so slow I start thinking detox, stand slightly more sober for an instant. The squad stops in front of us. I salute.

"Your friend O.K.?" cop says.

"He's tired," I say. "He got fired. Hey, that rhymed."

"Poet and you didn't know it."

"But my feet show it 'cause they're long fellers."

The cop produces an arm from the car window, and in the hand on the end of his ham of a forearm he holds two paper squares. Rectangles, maybe. "Want tickets there, pally? Six-buck special. For the salute."

"All I got's a twenty."

He gives me the tickets, takes the twenty. Drives away instead of making change.

I kick Max's legs, try to lift him by his torso. "Tickets, man! Tick-ets!"

"Go on without me," he says, picking at his stitches. "I'm not gonna make it."

"Don't you die on me now. We're almost at the chopper."

Eventually I get him to his feet, arm over my shoulder. "Gimme a minute," he says. He lurches up against a tree trunk and violently dry heaves for a while. When he's done, he puts his hands on his knees and spits in the grass. Takes a deep breath.

"There you go," I say. "In with the good stuff, out with the bad."

He arches his back, spreads his fists and howls at the moon, "O-reeoooooooooos!" Smiles at me with his eyes closed, swaying. "O.K., I'm ready. Wait—" Stops smiling. "News flash." He pukes on the curb, his shirt, his E.R. scrubs; paints a station wagon; fills the back of a pickup; finally falls on his back in the grass, breathing like a sedated beast.

I poke his head with my toe. "Maybe I will go on without you." I crouch, slap him. "Hey," I say. "Hey," again and again and again in time with each slap. It's kind of fun. Nothing will move him. "Well," I tell the tree, "I tried." The tree understands. "Stay here, Max." I fold a ticket and set it on his nose.

From the stadium speakers, someone screams how he got his mojo working. The gate lady waves me through without ripping my ticket. As I'm heading for my section, the music cuts off. The crowd starts in, louder than ever, like they're getting their limbs torn off, but no, they're chanting somebody's name—it's my name—the whole of Camden Yards is chanting, "*Fih-dy! Fih-dy! Fih-dy!*" I come from the tunnel into fists and faces and foam fingers waving, and across the field on the Sony JumboTron I see a two-story picture of some guy named Eddie and none of this has anything to do with me.

I don't remember how the game was, or who won. I remember fat, red people wrestling. A guy in a rainbow wig with someone's name and time of day on cardboard: "John 3:16." I wanted to tell him, "It's almost ten. John's not coming."

At one point the big screen said:

JASON SCHENKBERG
IN SECTION 87 SAYS:
PAULA,
WILL YOU MARRY ME?

It showed the couple in their seats. She seemed stunned, eyes still on the JumboTron while he sat with a beer and the ring in his hands. She winced, leaned away, slid in her finger like she was reaching in the garbage. He kissed her and spilled beer on her pants. The guy behind them gave them a ball—a foul he'd caught earlier, when the P.A.'d screamed, "Give that fan a contract!"

Next thing the game's over, people are headed for the exits, mooing, laughing, pushing one another into strangers. I'm outside the stadium in the gigantic blue night, scab of a moon on its forehead.

I find Max face down in the median grass, sleeping like he fell off a building. A bucktooth black kid with walleye squats, pokes the back of Max's neck. "Your friend O.K.?" he wants to know.

"He ate something funny."

"He ain't laughing."

Around us the crowd spreads toward their cars. Somewhere someone screams, "*Nimrod! Get your black ass back over heuh!*" Nimrod laughing through his fingers, hiding his enormous teeth. He keeps the wandering eye on me.

I have to squint to get him in focus. Closing one eye helps. The kid's got my prayer beads on—big as a belt on his wrist—fingers open wide so they won't fall off. I'd stretched them over the top of a fire hydrant when Max and I first sat on the curb. "Where'd you get those?"

"They're mine."

"Nimrod!" His massive mother comes from the rows of cars, stands legs apart with her fists on her hips. "Boy, don't make me come over there."

"We're just talking, Ma'am," I say.

"Ain't nobody ask yo' drunk ass."

"True enough."

She turns away from us and lumbers back where she came from, says over her shoulder, "Nimrod, you don't beat me to the car, I'ma whoop you shiny."

He gets halfway to the cars when I say, "Hey, kid," like Mean Joe Greene in the Coke commercial. I reach in my shirt. Throw him the rock and he puts it in his pocket. ♦

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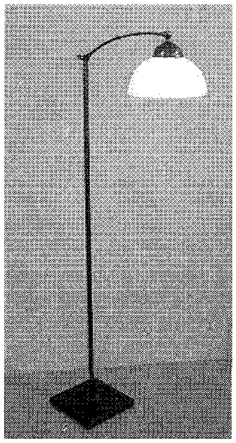

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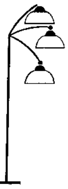

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ABBA TO ŻYWNY

The newest Grove Dictionary tries to bring it all together.

BY ALEX ROSS

At the Grammy Awards earlier this year, Madonna offered not only an energetic performance of her latest hit single but also a working definition of the art. "Music makes the people come together," she sang. The morning after the broadcast, Regis Philbin, the co-host of "Live with Regis and Kelly," wanted to know what song Madonna had performed. "She sang 'Music,' " Kelly Ripa explained. Philbin gave the audience a mournful, blank stare, and the audience burst out laughing. Music makes the people come together, but not all at once.

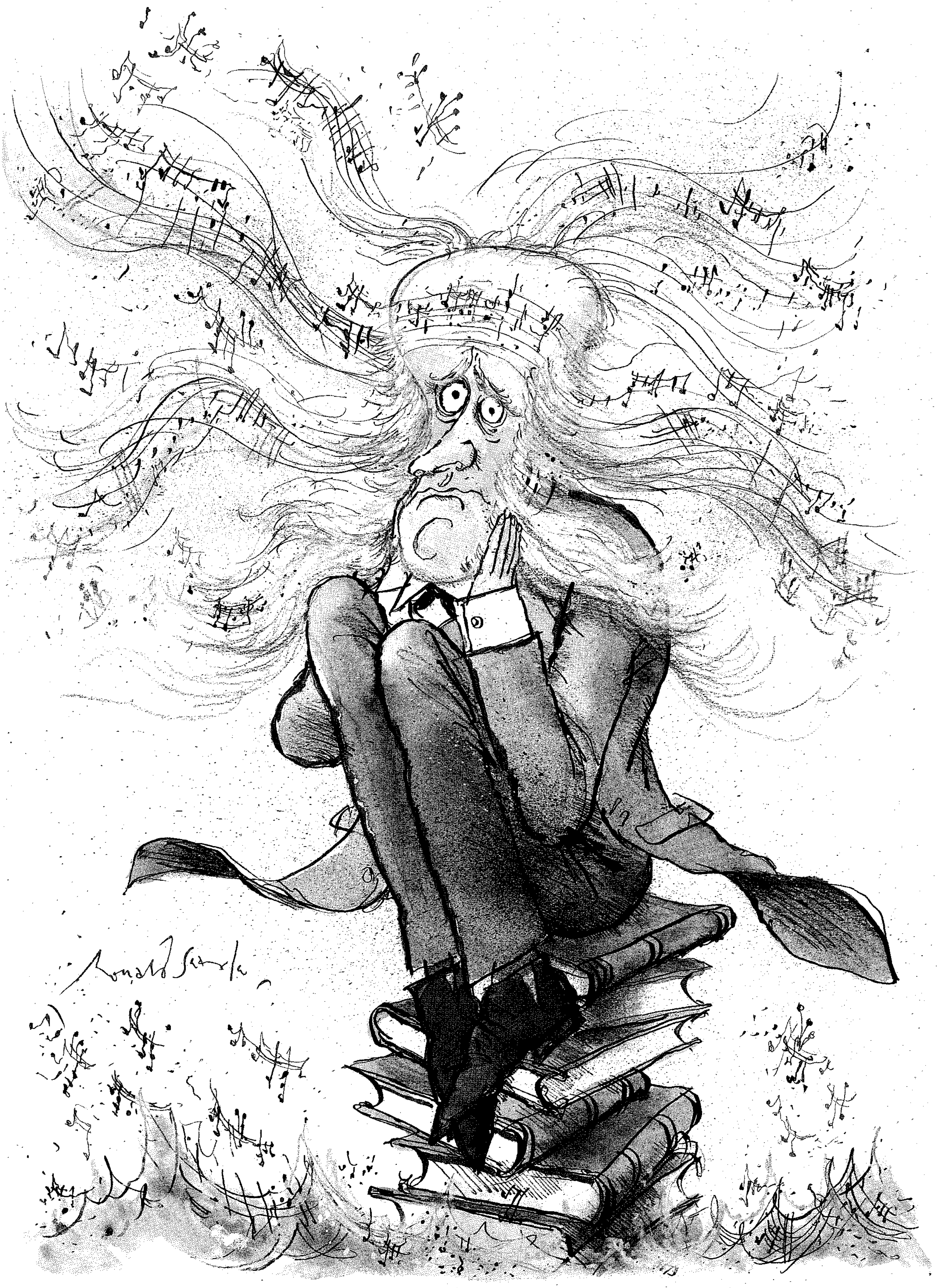
Madonna gets four paragraphs in the recently published second edition of the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, a reference work in twenty-nine volumes. Near her, in Volume XV ("Liturgy to Martinů"), are Geoffrey Douglas Madge, an Australian pianist who has performed Kaikhosru Sorabji's four-hour-long "Opus Clavicembalisticum"; the eighteenth-century organist and composer Nonnosus Madlseder, said to have been "highly regarded"; and the band Madness, here described as "mordant." In the kingdom of the Grove, the great and the small, the transient and the ancient, the boring and the weird lie side by side. Names glow like hieroglyphs on the wall of a tomb: "Paulus Spongopoeus Gistebnicenus … arguably the most prolific Bohemian composer of his time." Page after page is an Ozymandian landscape in which grand ambitions rest at the edge of oblivion. Look, ye Mighty, on the works of August Bungert, *floruit* 1900, the composer of four Homeric operas and the symphonic poem "Genius Triumphans: Zeppelin's First Great Flight."

What single definition could make sense of all this racket? Webster's calls music "the science or art of incorporating pleasing, expressive, or intelligible combinations of vocal or instrumental tones," which is pretty vague, and fails to explain Limp Bizkit. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia dubbed music "a specific variant of the sound made by people." The theorist Ernst Kurth claimed to hear "the erupted radiations of far more powerful fundamental processes whose energies revolve in the inaudible." The Grove, with a resigned smile, defines music as "the principal subject of the publication at hand": Beethoven plus Bungert, Madonna plus Madlseder. The article on "Music" arrives at this weak-sounding but secretly potent conclusion: "There is little doubt that each reader of this work believes firmly in the existence of music and subscribes to a specific conception of it, yet one ventures to assert that there is none who can imagine life without it." A good aphorism hides in the Germanic thicket—an extension of Nietzsche's "Without music, life would be a mistake." Music is often treated as cultural décor, but if it were dispensable then we ought to be able to imagine life without it, and we cannot. The beginning of Wagner's "Ring," in which a chord grows from a tone that seems to have been sounding forever, suggests that music is the basic noise of life.

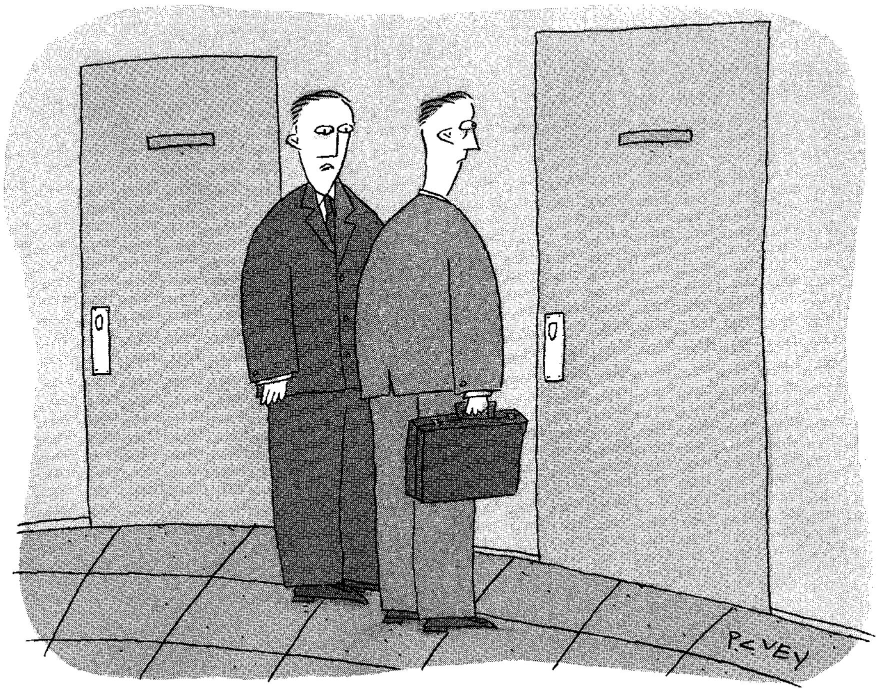
For the most part, this is a dictionary of classical music. People in the business fondly talk about "going to the Grove," as if they were about to camp out in a comfortable patch of woods. Each edition—the original was completed in 1889, with major revisions appearing in 1904, 1927, 1940, 1954, and 1980—has served as an approximate summa of the state of musical knowledge. This one is different on two counts. First, it is joined by an online version, which will be updated on an almost continuous basis. Second, it offers vastly expanded coverage of twentieth-century music, avant-garde music, world music, jazz, and pop. What was once a conservative institution is now eclectic to the max. With the expansion, however, has come a fluctuation of standards. For considerable stretches, the Grove seems to be comprehending the entirety of musical experience, but then it stumbles into areas where it has only limited competence. It is bigger than ever, but it is no longer infallible. It is a monument and a mess—not unlike the medium that it covers.

Sir George Grove, the dictionary's founding editor, lived from 1820 to 1900. He was an engineer of bridges and lighthouses, a scholar of the Bible, and a fanatical, self-taught music lover. He was among the first to pay serious attention to Franz Schubert, and his researches helped inspire the dictionary's meticulous work lists, which now go on for dozens of pages, or, in the case of Franz Liszt, nearly a hundred. Grove was not a career academic, in contrast to most of those who carry on his legacy today. The early editions were notable not only for the intensity of their scholarship but also for the bully-pulpit grandeur of their language. Here is a sample: "Bach created an entirely new vocal style based on instrumental principles, carried it to the summit of perfection, and there left it." Let us pray. The first edition, in four plump volumes, is full of errors and prejudices, but it speaks with conviction. Libraries should think twice before casting it aside.

Even though the Grove has become an increasingly international enterprise, with six thousand contributors from ninety-eight countries—I wrote a brief entry on the composer Stephen Hartke—it is still unmistakably English in tone. One of the highlights of my



The conservative reference work that Grove published in 1889 has grown into a smorgasbord of twenty-five million words.



"Don't be afraid—it's just your office."

• •

browsing was the discovery of Henry Bishop, the author of "Home, Sweet Home," who, it turns out, was an insanely prolific composer of musical entertainments, the titles of which are reproduced with an implicit donnish chuckle: "The Sedan Chair," "Love in a Tub," "Swedish Patriotism," "Rural Felicity," "Stanfield's Diorama, in Davy Jones, or Harlequin and Mother Carey's Chickens." In the text, Nicholas Temperley tracks the ups and downs, or, more accurately, the up and down, of Bishop's career. "Not only his wife but his public had deserted him," Temperley says of the composer's final years. "In 1841 he was elected to the Reid Professorship at Edinburgh University, but he resigned in 1843, having given a total of two lectures."

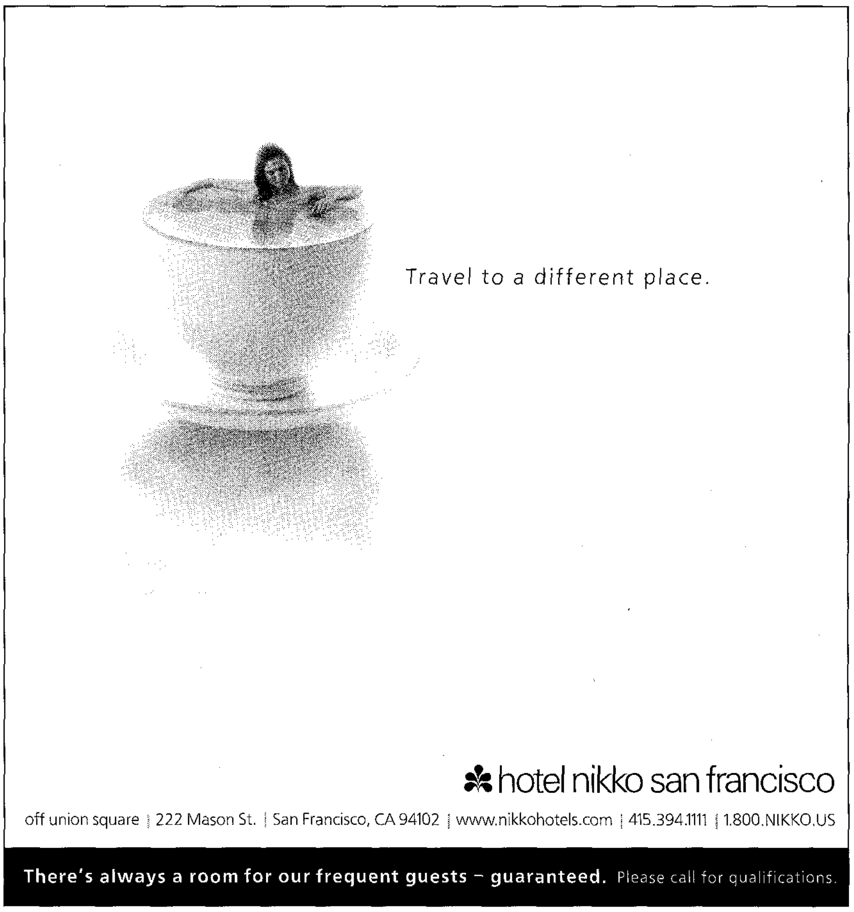
No less droll is the case of Frederick Arthur Gore Ouseley, a Victorian, whose childhood works are said to have shown "as much skill and originality as Mozart's." Yet "something in his upbringing made Ouseley repress this early vitality of imagination." It happens. Still, the entry goes on for three columns. After a few of these Oxbridgean tours de force, some browsers may begin to feel impatient, especially when more important figures, from other lands, are being given shorter shrift. There is space for such almost famous Englishmen as Malcolm Binns, Barry Wordsworth, and the twenty-five-year-old conductor Daniel Harding, but not for Paul Jacobs, Sanford Sylvan, Osvaldo Golijov, Lauren Flanigan, Bethany Beardslee, the label CRI, the early-music group Pomerium, and Glimmerglass Opera, among many other American musicians and institutions. Likewise, in pop, the Happy Mondays and the Manic Street Preachers make the grade while Ralph Stanley and Beck do not. The distribution of space raises questions, too. Is Peter Maxwell Davies more important than Aaron Copland? Is Harrison Birtwistle a bigger deal than Leonard Bernstein? Time will tell, gentlemen.

When it comes to the central figures of musical history, the Grove gets the proportions right. Beethoven is still champion after all these years, with forty-two double-columned pages of biography and analysis. As in the previous edition, Beethoven's works are written up flawlessly by Joseph Kerman, the dean of American musicologists. J. S. Bach gets thirty-six pages, Schubert thirty-four, Haydn thirty-three, Handel thirty-one, Mozart twenty-nine. Coming up strong in the modern field are Stravinsky (twenty-eight pages), Britten (twenty-five), and Shostakovich (twenty-one). Many of the twentieth-century entries have been written fresh for this edition, and they tend to be superb. James Hepokoski's essay on Jean Sibelius, for example, is the most authoritative account of the composer that exists in print. It is inventive in the terms it devises for an idiosyncratic style, and it is also a beautifully shaded evocation of a troubled man. Sibelius is portrayed as a visionary who "had come to regard certain types of sound-image with reverence, as spiritually mappable onto the manifestations of Being concealed behind the visible surface of nature." At the same time, he is shown in all his self-pitying, self-consuming melancholy. The quotations that are culled from his diary are extraordinarily painful to read. "Alcohol, which I gave up, is now my most faithful companion," he wrote in 1923. "Everything and everyone else have largely failed me."

If only certain of the longer nineteenth-century entries spoke with the same kind of immediacy. In the essay on Schubert, the founder's great love, Robert Winter assembles a vast amount of biographical material and goes through it in approximately chronological sequence, but the effect is to turn the composer into a strange sort of musical business traveller, notable chiefly for his movement from town to town and street to street. The controversy that has bubbled up in recent years over Schubert's sexual identity is mentioned, but no clear stand is taken. The article proceeds to a description of the music. The methodology is to divide the composer's output into formal categories, then to attach adjectives to each major work in sequence. Here are some consecutive samples from the section on piano music: "original," "most original," "strikingly original," "bold," "highly individual," "highly dramatic," "highly original," "most original," "extraordinarily bold." It's all true. But Winter fails to establish what this originality consisted of—what made Schubert different.

Much of the writing in the new Grove is grim, showing a seepage of academic lingo. Bach, for example, no longer climbs to the summit of perfection; instead, he produces "homogeneous language of considerable density." Is it music, or last month's milk? The essay on Mahler declares that in his Fifth Symphony the composer "opted for a rhetoric that brings to the foreground a constructed musical subjectivity whose task is to control and unify the protean character changes that define its discourse." The word "musical" is the only clue that this sentence is describing a symphony rather than a novel, a film, or a rival academic treatise. The word "sound" plays a similar hold-the-fort role in a bizarrely geological account of the German avant-gardist Johannes Kalitzke: "Explosive force generating from a single focal point often serves to integrate diverse facets of sound, causing both compression and extension to occur within each structural layer." And consider the following descriptions: "His musical structures are designed around the internal organization of related series of sounds"; and "Motifs are often inspired by specific intervals that then pervade the melody, and individual lines are at times composed of a string of related ideas." The first is of the contemporary composer Peter Šavli; the second is of the Renaissance composer Pierre de La Rue. But the reverse could easily be true, and either sentence could apply to almost any composer in history.

In a reference work of twenty-five million words, some parts will be better than others, but it is easy to locate a few recurring problems in this edition. One is an abhorrence of biographical color. While it is a dictionary's role to play it safe, there are cases in which caution becomes concealment. The "hopelessness" of the German composer Bernd Alois Zimmermann makes more sense if you know that he committed suicide. Another problem is the erratic coverage of singers and instrumentalists. While entries for musicologists seem to be multiplying, those for musicians seem to be declining. Once upon a time, the Grove celebrated Lillian Evans Blauvelt, a Brooklyn-born singer who sang with the Wagner conductor Anton Seidl. Her voice was said to have been "a pure soprano of exquisite quality, pure, clear, and brilliant, but with fine warmth and intelligence." She is gone. So are Rose Caron, a reigning diva of the Paris Opéra in the eighteen-eighties and nineties, and Giuseppina Pasqua, who pleased the implacable Verdi. I'd hate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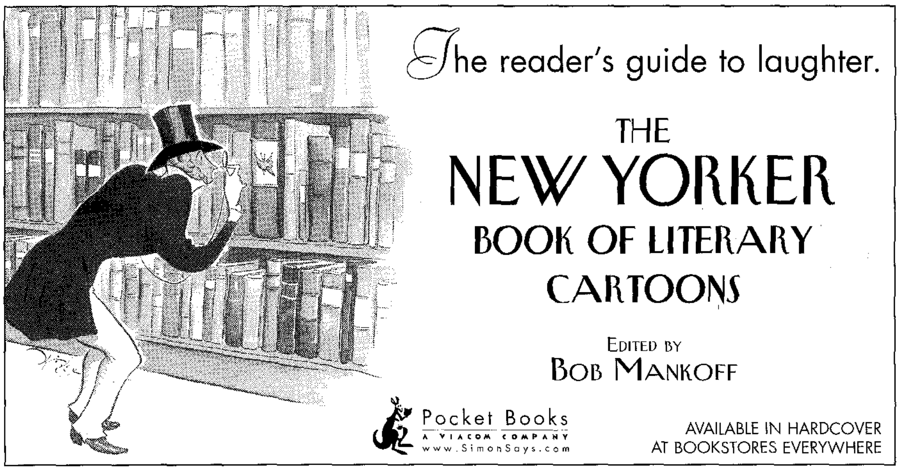
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to think that any of those women were pushed aside by Dr. Alexander Weinmann, the author of twenty-four books on Viennese music publishers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The musicians who do make it in are given variable treatment. Violinists will laugh at the description of Anne-Sophie Mutter as "a solid player." A golf encyclopedia wouldn't get away with calling Tiger Woods a solid player. Music-making does not seem to be a hot topic in academe these days.

Finally, there are the rock and jazz entries, which range from the excellent to the execrable. It is a delight to read anything by Robert Walser, a rock scholar whose writing is precise and streetwise. (He calls Iggy Pop "an intense and transgressive performer who sometimes went so far as to roll in broken glass or otherwise wound himself.") Ian MacDonald gets the Beatles about right, taking them seriously without piling on the pretensions of highbrow writers past. On the other hand, the article on Miles Davis flirts with gibberish: the jazzman's music of the sixties is called "chordless." There are no errors in the entry for ABBA, but something is hilariously wrong with it: ABBA's "prominent characteristics are sensuous combinations of diatonic melody and tonal harmony, often involving harmonic motion alternating between two or three chords." And what about this for Hank Williams: his "strained, mournful singing style, partly a result of addiction to liquor and drugs as well as a troubled marriage, was influenced by Roy Acuff and southern gospel music." The grammar is as bad as the psychology.

Much has been made of the Grove's transition to the online world—grovemusic.com—but the print edition already has the look of an electronic event: a lot of entries seem to have been zapped from E-mail to the page without anyone's taking a second glance at them. The word from behind the scenes is that the dictionary was rushed into production despite the objections of its longtime editor, Stanley Sadie, who subsequently handed over the job to John Tyrrell. This explains some of the more obvious problems with the first printing, such as the disappearance of many of Stravinsky's works and the severe attenuation of the Wagner bibliography. (Alas, it is not true that only one book on Wagner has been written since 1979.) The petty errors, however, will be corrected over time. What matters more is the editorial policy that the Grove sets in place for coming years. Many musicians in these pages are unrecognizable as human beings. Someone needs to draw up a brief memo: Write English. Write about sound and emotion. Write for a curious music lover who finds the Grove in her public library.

The Grove is still a magnificent achievement, and, more than that, it is a work of love. It moves valiantly toward an unattainable goal: music is the vaguest of the arts, and the one that is least likely to be captured between the covers of an encyclopedia. In a way, the Grove's minutiae are like the rapid murmurings of an anxious lover who is afraid of the feeling in his heart. The writers are not finding the simple words for their love. George Grove understood the art of communication better; he reached for the strong analogy, the telling metaphor. This is how he summed up Beethoven: "As Newton before his death spoke of himself as 'a child picking up a few shells on the shore while the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before him,' so does Beethoven . . . express himself at the close of his life: 'I feel as if I had written scarcely more than a few notes.' " Writing on Schubert, he let his affection saturate the page: "Think what the first appearance of these godlike pieces must have been! It was the rising of the Sun!"

The best parts of the new Grove are those in which writers fall into the grip of some kind of intellectual urgency. Richard Taruskin's essay on musical nationalism suggests, among other things, how classical music came to find itself in ivory-tower isolation. In the nineteenth century, Russian, Czech, and Hungarian composers tried to liberate themselves from the hegemony of German music by incorporating native folklore into their works. In response, German composers, in an astonishing intellectual sleight of hand, defined the national style not in terms of folk sources but in terms of abstract ideals. "One showed oneself a German, not ethnically but spiritually, by putting oneself in humanity's vanguard," Taruskin writes. This rhetoric became the international jargon of progressive music in the twentieth century, and nationalist composition was rendered unfashionable. The final result, ironically, was a cosmopolitan élite style—what Olivier Messiaen called "the international grey on grey." As Taruskin indicates in his conclusion, composers now face the difficult task of liberating themselves from the snarl of Germanic thought—bits of Hegel, bits of Wagner, sizable chunks of Theodor W. Adorno—that constitutes the ideology of modern music.

Another remarkable effort—in a way, the answer to Taruskin's tale of arrogance and obsolescence—is J. Peter Burkholder's essay "Borrowing," which tells of all the ways in which composers, songwriters, and record producers have creatively stolen from each other in order to keep the art alive. It is almost a corollary to the "Music" entry, ranging from Guillaume de Machaut to Grandmaster Flash, taking in Handel, Stravinsky, and the Beatles. When Bob Dylan reused portions of the old song "Lord Randal" in "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," he made what medieval scholars called a "contrafactum"; the same process helped generate Bach's B-Minor Mass and "The Star-Spangled Banner." Here is a definition that holds up: music is incessantly extending, reversing, emulating, mocking, and erasing what's already there. Grove's ocean of undiscovered truth, in other words, is music as a whole—which is why Beethoven spent so much time in his final years poring over the manuscripts of his elders, looking for the way back that would lead him forward. Some version of the Grove will persist as long as music is taken seriously as a means of personal expression. The book is like a corridor with a million doors, each opening onto a separate world.

The Grove ends, as did the previous edition, on a suitably obscure, almost mystical note, with an entry for the nineteenth-century Polish piano teacher and composer Wojciech Żywny, who taught Chopin. At the hands of this man, Chopin later said, "the greatest ass would learn." What did Żywny sound like? The Sphinx is silent. "None of his works were published," the Grove intones, "and nearly all are lost." The End. *Fine. Das Ende.* Wait, where's ZZ Top? ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Cold Six Thousand, *by James Ellroy (Knopf; $25.95).* Ellroy's prose is easy to absorb sentence by sentence, thanks to his simple subject-verb-object constructions, but monstrous as it acquires cumulative force over hundreds of pages. This bruiser of a novel picks up Ellroy's deeply pessimistic history lesson where his last, "American Tabloid," left off, with the murder of J.F.K., and builds toward the twin tragedies of the King and Robert Kennedy killings. Though characters reappear—most notably, the hit man Pete Bondurant and the Mob lawyer Ward Littell—there's no comfort in the familiar faces. In fact, there's no comfort at all. The novel is an exhausting, masochistic, often revelatory rereading of the allegedly idealistic sixties—an assassination, finally, of the decade rather than of its leaders.

Sister Crazy, *by Emma Richler (Pantheon; $22).* In these interconnected stories, which have the spiky specificity of memoir and the layered nuance of fiction, four charming siblings journey into adulthood while their middle sister is left behind—in a netherworld brightened by the lure of sharp objects and the glow of the filled wineglass. But, unlike most tales of family dysfunction, Richler's is a romance, a dense mythology of Westerns and Arthurian loyalties and perplexing Catholic rituals; adult life pales, almost fatally, in comparison. Comic, poignant, and terrifying, these unusual stories expose the dangers of loving one's loving family too much to break free of it.

Daughters of Britannia, *by Katie Hickman (Morrow; $25).* The author, a travel writer who is the daughter of an English diplomat, draws on both family memories and archives to examine the experiences of British women who, from the seventeenth century on, were sent abroad with tacit orders that amounted to blackmail: behave if you want your husband to succeed in the foreign service. They were to serve as discreetly unflappable models of womanhood while enduring, as their letters home report, hardship, danger, isolation, boredom, and the oppressive rule of the ambassador's wife. Hickman's social history is not intended as an arraignment, but its record of centuries of unpaid labor is an implicit argument for feminism.

Close to Shore, *by Michael Capuzzo (Broadway; $24.95).* With an artistry reminiscent of Stephen Crane's "Whilomville Stories," Capuzzo chronicles a series of great-white-shark attacks on swimmers—the first in American history—along the New Jersey coast in the summer of 1916. Chapters that bring the period to life are interspersed with chapters on ichthyology; our modern knowledge of this consummately engineered predator only increases our appreciation of the terror and incredulity that the attacks unleashed. Capuzzo's book is a portrait of the shark as much as of the era, and deserves a place among the adventure classics.

Pity the Bathtub Its Forced Embrace of the Human Form, *by Matthea Harvey (Alice James; $11.95).* In Harvey's intensely visual début collection of poems, a painter says of his self-portrait, "It was bigger than me. The perspective was not mine." Throughout, we meet artists and eccentrics obsessed with the reflections they cast, often shaping the world to match their private illusions: a gardener "crows with / delight" as his sugar maple takes the form of a rooster; a woman paints her baseboards the color of her dachshund. Mournfully comic and syntactically inventive, Harvey's poems are both pleas for attentiveness ("Amaze me with / what you know. Do the barnacles really look / like ancient daisies, did the starfish really / turn orange & purple from holding on?") and elegies for the images we try, but fail, to capture.

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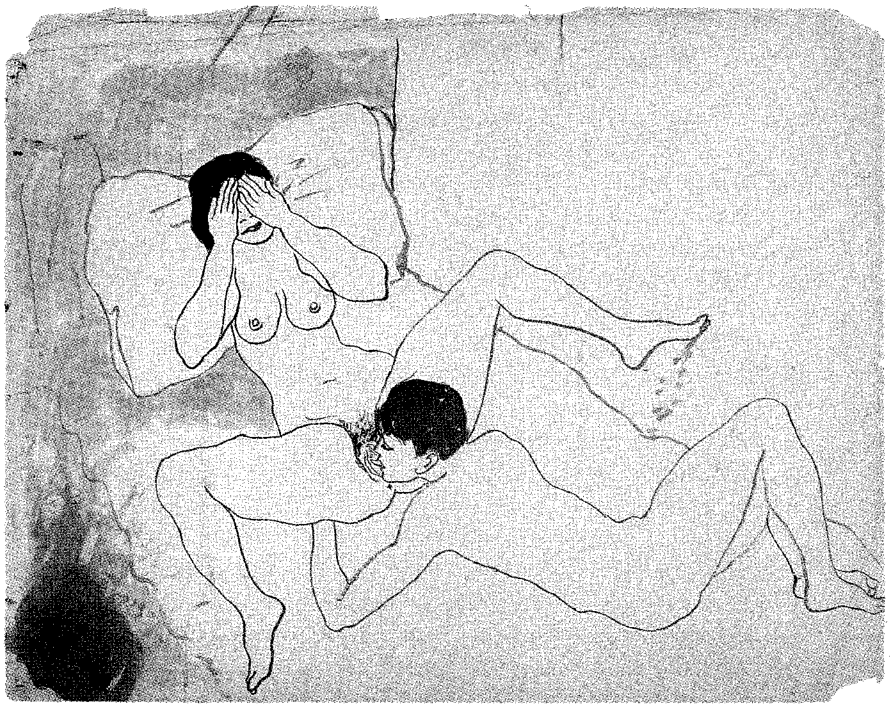
PICASSO'S LUST

Was sex the artist's real muse?

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



"Scène Érotique" (1902): Sex as invisible pleasure by a master of the sensuous line.

PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS/ARS

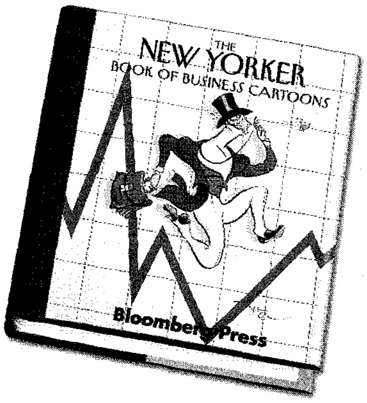
The Museum of Fine Arts, in Montreal, has a show, "Picasso Érotique," that will give you fresh thoughts about the twentieth century's definitive artist. Here's one of mine: all Picasso's pictures are dirty. They are rooted in lust and cultivated with glee. Love has very little to do with them, and forget romance. The word "gallantry" will do for the finer gestures of Picassoid amour, such as the exquisite pathos of his "rose period" carnival folk and the august monumentality of his neoclassicism. But even when he is at his most refined the Spanish rooster crows. Picasso said that for him sexuality and art were the same thing, leading us to believe that he made love as he made art—that is, with domineering audacity and gloating pride. I imagine that his every kiss was signed "Picasso." Certainly, his every work of art memorializes self-delight: "Picasso is doing this!" As a practical matter, he required consenting others—willing women, attentive viewers—but to indulge them was beneath him. I'm accustomed to feeling used up after any Picasso show: shaky with pleasure and not so much sent on my way as seduced and abandoned. Sometimes I despise him. But I'll always go back to him.

"Picasso Érotique" is not just another Picasso show. It is the most illuminating of the many I've seen. It is extensive, with about three hundred and fifty works, and it brings into vivid focus three previously blurry periods of crisis for the artist: youth (until 1905 or so), midlife (the Surrealist phase, starting around 1927), and old age (several years before his death, at the age of ninety-one, in 1973). The show persuasively argues that Picasso's successive styles, including Cubism, are more or less transparent masks or costumes for his sexual avidity, whatever else they are, too. If "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" were present, the case would be clinched by that revolutionary nexus of the obscene and the analytical—a handshake between the Marquis de Sade and Pythagoras. (Studies for "Demoiselles," along with related works, fill in well enough.) The show's candor is overdue and refreshing. It cuts through the miasma of gossip about the artist's mistresses that has long been Picasso scholarship's expedient for coping with the sex in his work. "Picasso Érotique" does provide a time line of photographs and capsule biographies of his seven leading ladies, from Fernande to Jacqueline, but the art on display quickly confirms that his chief passion was always for himself in action as an artist and as a lover.

The show opened at the Jeu de Paume, in Paris, last winter, and it will travel to the Museu Picasso in Barcelona—its last stop. It will not visit the United States, for reasons that I'm afraid are self-evident. It begins with a fabulously effective coup de théâtre by the Montreal curatorial team, led by Jean-Jacques Lebel—a reproduced, full-scale fin-de-siècle brothel bedroom with a projection of ancient, highly explicit porn films—that would be inconceivable in a public museum south of Quebec unless accompanied by a politically earnest wall text. The installation posits the sort of sexual experience that was routine for the teen-age Picasso in Barcelona. The room is not just squalid and hot; it's cheerfully so. It assumes a worldly, resilient maturity in viewers. How often does anything made in America do that? Well, there's something to be said for the joys of shockability. The musky European allure of "Picasso Érotique" gave me a madeleine hit of nostalgia for the art house in Minneapolis where I first tasted espresso and beheld Brigitte Bardot onscreen, more than forty years ago. The Montreal show delivers what those old, subtitled films only hinted at. The first picture is a sketch of two donkeys in flagrante that Picasso made when he was twelve years old, and the show proceeds with works that are graphic in more ways than one. The drawings range from trivial, raunchy caricatures of his friends dallying with prostitutes—images that affirm the social, men's-clubby aspect that brothels had for the artist's circle—to sensitive renderings of sexual activity that breathe a quiet intensity. In a delicate drawing in blue ink, a lover of uncertain gender performs oral sex on a woman who covers her eyes with her hands, perhaps the better to concentrate on her delight. The lovely image conveys a truth—that sexual sensation is internal and invisible—that Picasso would spend a lifetime combatting. The whole course of his art is marked by the devising of one pictorial strategem after another for turning bodily consciousness inside out.

The Montreal selection of Picasso's early pornographic images covers the standard repertoire of sexual tastes, plus bits of bestiality and a vision of murder by strangulation. Only male homosexuality is excluded—except for one crude cartoon joke in which an artist, as he grasps the hand of a naked woman labelled "Glory," is buggered by a critic. Odd symbolic motifs include a female nude who nestles inside a god-faced phallus and a woman who displays her vagina while reclining in another, gigantic vagina. In this context, works of beauty startle. "La Toilette" (1906), a masterpiece from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, which shows a willowy nude doing her hair in a mirror that is held by a clothed woman, demonstrates Picasso's transmutation of randiness into erotic poetry. It also marks the onset of his confidence as a master. Bouts of insecurity seem to have triggered his reversions to explicit sexual themes after 1927—when, miserably married, he took up with the young Marie-Thérèse Walter—and toward the end of his life. In the first instance, he reëngineered the female body as an ensemble of strictly erogenous parts and projected himself as Jupiter or the Minotaur, for whom love and rape are interchangeable pursuits. Many of these works are familiar, but some that are in the show, depicting penetration, are new to me. And I never suspected the profusion, in Picasso's last phase, of coital grap-

Very
funny
business,
indeed!



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plings, often attended by male voyeurs.

It is sometimes presumed that those voyeurs represent Picasso in impotent decrepitude, but there seems to be no evidence for the notion. Indeed, the funniest, most sweetly sexy works of the artist's career take up the theme of voyeurism. A special treat of the Montreal show is a suite of twenty-five marvellous etchings—made in the course of twelve days in 1968—that imagine the painter Raphael doing the deed with his model and mistress La Fornarina under the eyes of a male watcher, usually Pope Julius II. The sex is necessarily athletic, because it doesn't occur to Raphael to let go of his brushes and palette for convenience's sake. The Pope sometimes lurks but more often sits at ease on a throne or on a chamber pot. In some of the pictures, he seems disapproving. In others, he appears to be having a whale of a time. (If anyone in attendance is grumpy, it's Raphael's rival Michelangelo, who is occasionally shown hiding under the bed.) If the eighty-six-year-old Picasso was ruing his senescence at the time he did these etchings, he forgot it in the course of spinning hilarious fantasies with sensual panache. The series celebrates a delirious conflation of art and sex, of looking and doing—a higher mathematics of eroticism that consigns the usual physical measures of conjugal performance to the status of dull arithmetic.

Sex served Picasso as an indestructible substitute for the social agreements and systems of belief that had previously grounded art in the world. Not for him the utopian or Arcadian, progressive or quasi-religious programs of other modern artists; he scorned both abstraction and contemporary subject matter. Not that he made choices in these matters. His temperament was his destiny. (Despite his intentions for "Guernica," that great painting fails as propaganda by dissolving a topical outrage into timeless myth. His later attempts to be a good Communist, with images of peace doves and the like, account for perhaps his only truly bad work.) As a result, his art can never become dated, let alone old-fashioned. A virtuosic modernizer in form, he was a skulking primitive in content—not only premodern but prehistorical, revelling in primal mud. Like the makers of the Lascaux petroglyphs, he was essentially a graphic artist. He was a swordsman of the thrusting line. His curves often ache to straighten, as if they were bent springs; and the caress of his paint-handling is no smoother than a cat's tongue. No matter how attenuated the sexual charge of his work became, it guided his choices of mark and color. Is there something tedious about Picasso's bullying machismo? There certainly is—when you aren't looking at his art. When you do look, he's got you by the scruff of your instinctual being.

We make a mistake when we imagine that genius must be complicated. It is the opposite. We ordinary citizens are complex, using much of our biological energy just to keep our fragmented selves in working order. Albert Einstein reported that his theories were born in fantasies of "visual" and "muscular" activities; only when these fantasies felt satisfying and could be reproduced at will did he begin doing the math. Compare this to Picasso's famous boast that he never sought but only found. What the intellect of each man required was already present in his body, whose dark knowledge had unimpeded access to the dials and levers of abstract reason. "Picasso Érotique" gives teeming evidence of a process by which low-down impulses modulate, as they rise, into prodigies of intelligence. The mechanism has a minimum of moving parts. (Picasso can seem to have had just two, of which one was his brush.) Most art education relentlessly emphasizes the great artists' loftiest achievements—which, like $E=mc^2$, reduce us to clueless awe. Picasso's goatish stuff in Montreal takes us down the scale, making the germination of his art matter-of-factly apprehensible. The phenomenon is no more or less mysterious than any other fact of nature—and is as little answerable to our approval or disapproval. We needn't live with Picasso, thank goodness, but only brain surgery could stop him from living in us. ♦

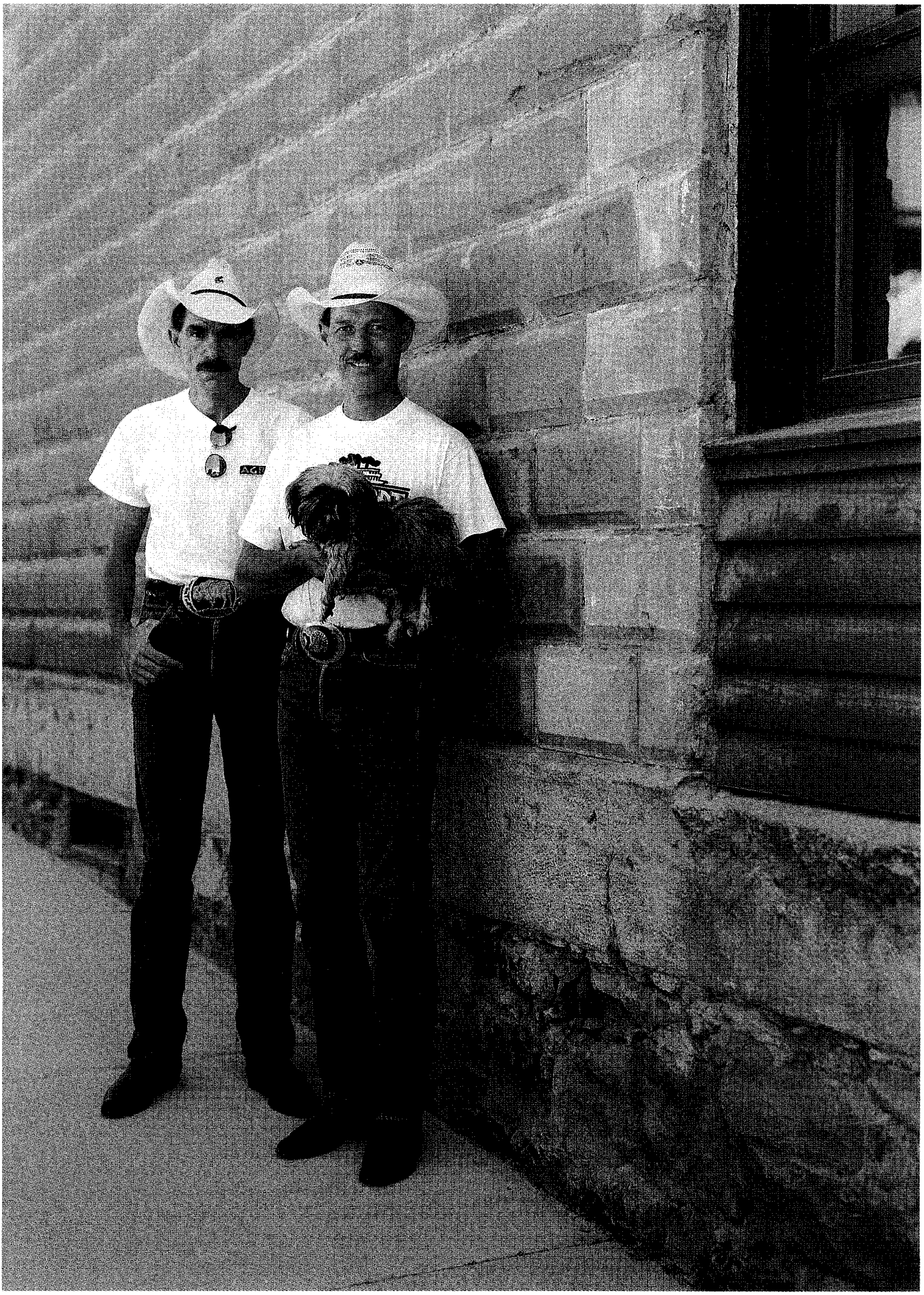
AT THE MUSEUMS

AMERICANS

The photographer Joel Sternfeld has always been fascinated by the ways we attempt to make our surroundings conform to our particular visions. In his new body of work, "Stranger Passing"—which opens next week at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and will be published as a book by Bulfinch in the fall—we are introduced to a complex assortment of conformists and visionaries: two teen-agers roller-blading through the cornfields of Minnesota; a Somali woman in her native dress, pumping gas in Kansas City, Kansas; two men (right) on vacation in Big Fork, Montana.

In an age of relentless exposure, Sternfeld's portraits are marked by a refreshing formality and restraint. Many of the subjects are displaying some emblem of their ordinary life—a surfboard, a Palm pilot, grocery bags overflowing with produce—and no one is caught off-guard. (Even the big hound lounging by the pool in Malibu is looking directly at the camera, miraculously undistracted by the bloody bone at his side.) At the same time, clues in the surroundings—frying burgers and leashed dogs and bouquets of thirsty flowers—serve to remind us that these people have only a moment for a passing stranger. Sternfeld's title is borrowed from another American idealist, Walt Whitman: "Stranger! if you, passing, meet me, and desire to speak to me, / why should you not speak to me? / And why should I not speak to you?" Perhaps it is this Whitmanesque desire that Sternfeld's fellow-citizens—whether tattooed and nursing a baby on a stoop or suspended, Christlike, between two pay phones—pause to honor. They sense that a moment may be all the photographer needs. And they are right.

—*Alice Truax*



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THE THEATRE

HAUNTED HOUSES

Nights of the living dead.

BY JOHN LAHR

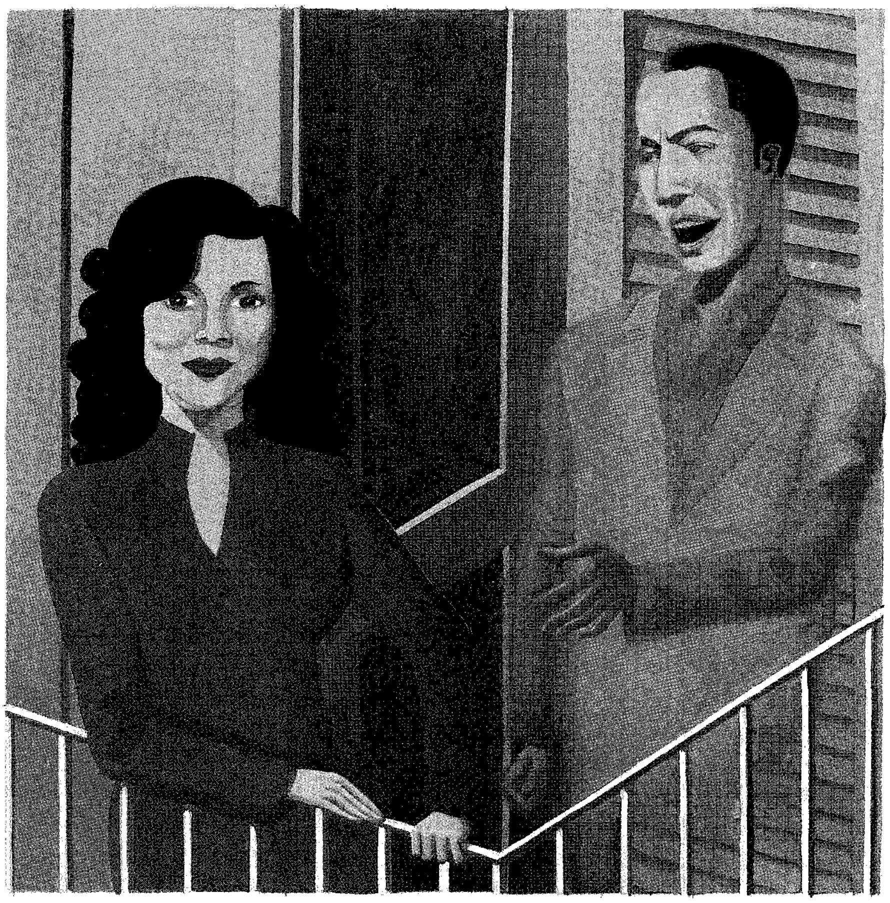
I'd like to report a first sighting of a new theatrical bird: the naturalistical. It is domesticated and lives happily in a bourgeois environment; it sings; it parrots human speech; it pecks but never bites; and it has a top-heavy plumage, which, like that of so many poorly adapted ornithological species, renders it unsuitable for flight, except in circles. The crossbreed in question is Charles Randolph-Wright's "Blue" (directed by Sheldon Epps, at the Roundabout's Gramercy Theatre), which is basically a sitcom with song—as if Neil Simon and Lorraine Hansberry had married and produced "The Jeffersons" with vocabulary.

"I always want music to speak for me," the narrator, a trumpet player named Reuben Clark (Hill Harper), tells us as the play begins. "I want music to be my language. I want it to hide where I came from, and to hide who I am." What follows is a game not of hide-and-seek but of hide-and-hide. The music returns Reuben to his childhood in a small South Carolina town, where his family owns the only African-American funeral home. Here, Reuben's beautiful, narcissistic, upwardly mobile mother, Peggy (Phylicia Rashad), rules the roost with a cunning withholding of affection and an ongoing fantasy of elegance and achievement, in which young Reuben (Chad Tucker) is idealized as "my own little Miles Davis" and Peggy is visited by the spectre of Blue Williams (the superb Michael McElroy), a jazz singer, who at first appears, and croons in a cool romantic vibrato, only to her.

Rashad is as grand, gorgeous, and glib as she was when she played opposite Bill Cosby on their classic TV series. "Sweetheart, we may run a funeral home, but that doesn't mean we don't have taste, and it doesn't mean that we are dead," Peggy tells her son, in the inept form of exposition that passes for dialogue in "Blue." Peggy never applies heat to food (she buys the Friday dinner and pretends to cook it); and, as a performer, Rashad never gets to cook, either, because the play explains everything that it should be showing. She gets her share of laughs, and no one can gainsay her timing. Surrounded by fur coats, cut-glass decanters, even a photograph of her family on the cover of *Ebony*, the highfalutin Peggy manages to clash amusingly with her critical mother-in-law, Tillie (the excellent Jewell Robinson), who at one point says "fuck" and gets whoops of laughter from the audience. (It's that kind of play.) But for the most part Rashad, who is great at reacting, can't drive a comic scene; her self-satisfaction robs her of a genuine sense of humor.

Peggy befriends her eldest son's toothsome "country" squeeze, LaTonya (Messeret Stroman), who also has a jones for Blue Williams, and takes her on a trip to Atlanta to see their hero perform. But, when LaTonya goes off with Williams, Peggy breaks down. All of this takes place offstage. In fact, Reuben's entire transition to manhood—his leaving home, his rejection of the trumpet, his therapy, and his final coming to terms with his mother—is also an offstage event. What we are left with is a patina of literacy and boulevard lyricism but no internal life. In its transparent desire both to please and to impress, Randolph-Wright's world is neither black nor white, comic nor tragic, cartoonish nor full-blooded. It inhabits a no man's land in a nowhere style that reveals nothing. As with Blue Williams, the play's spectre of solace, there's something ghostly and divided about the whole sorry proceeding.

A ghost is trapped energy, something unresolved and tormenting that haunts the living world. Ingmar Bergman's exquisite production of Strindberg's "Ghost Sonata" (1907) docked at the Brooklyn Academy of Music for five performances the week before last and has already left town. But its nightmare vision of a grotesque, soiled world, where the imagery is of blood, sewage, and rotting flesh, remains. Strindberg, a genius and a madman, anticipates both Freud and the theatrical avant-garde. His uncompromising lyrical vision is given a vivid, if chill, interpretation by Bergman. In this version, the characters are full of physical tics, warts, and wounds, at once trapped and ruined by the duress of life, and a panoply of outstanding performers from Sweden's Royal Dramatic Theatre—the stunning Elin Klinga, the terrifying Jan Malmsjö, and the memorable, birdlike Gunnel Lindblom—deliver the wallop of Strindberg's struggle between purity and sin. Bergman, who is Strindberg's heir (when he is in Stockholm, he lives in an apartment built on the spot where Strindberg lived), has found a strong, clear emotional line for the dream play and for the erotic longing and moral corruption to which both he and Strindberg bear witness.



In "Blue," Rashad is as grand, gorgeous, and glib as she was on "The Cosby Show."

KATHY OSBORN

A ghostliness also pervades Jonathan Larson's posthumously produced, autobiographical "Tick, Tick . . . Boom" (at the Jane Street Theatre). The show's title represents the author's fear of time running out on his musical dreams, but it also plays as a spooky reminder that time ran out on Larson. He died, at thirty-five, of an aortic aneurysm, just after the dress rehearsal of his sprawling musical "Rent"—the theatrical equivalent of winning the lottery and losing the ticket. "Tick, Tick . . . Boom" feels like a kind of ghoulish episode of "This Is Your Life." ("You're going to have a great future," we hear Stephen Sondheim, Larson's champion, announcing on Larson's voice mail at the finale.) Larson's ambition was to marry rock and roll to an up-to-the-minute Broadway-musical form, and this show, which has an orchestra of four and a slick, hardworking cast of three, shows him trying to adjust his goals to economic reality. Well directed by Scott Schwartz, and with Larson's plotline deftly reworked by David Auburn, it has a fetching modesty.

The show is set on the eve of the composer's thirtieth birthday—his Walpurgisnacht—as he is caught between the pressures to succeed and to settle. "Can he make a mark / If he gives up his spark?" Jonathan (the charming Raúl Esperza, with tousled hair, suspenders, and white high-top Keds) sings. In America, nobody pays you to be free, but this notion doesn't dawn on our jejune suburban hero, who has worked for four years waiting tables in SoHo to support his musical habit. He wants fame. He also wants the middle-class comforts: a BMW and a nice apartment like that of his friend Michael (Jerry Dixon), who has given up art for advertising and who contracts AIDS. Michael's predicament, unfortunately, doesn't rate a song. Only the loss of career prospects and anxiety at turning thirty (for God's sake!) move Jonathan to the piano.

The best songs in "Tick, Tick . . . Boom" have a quirky, playful directness. In "Green Green Dress," Jonathan introduces us to the allure of his blond girlfriend, Susan (the excellent Amy Spanger), and we feel a genuine sexual connection as they sing, "The green green dress / Twenty buttons and a strap / The green green dress / What a pleasure to unwrap." Susan wants to move to Cape Cod, but Jonathan needs the buzz of the big city for inspiration, and in "Therapy" he demonstrates the knots of their miscommunication:

> You feel bad about
> Me feeling bad about
> You feeling bad about
> What I said about
> What you said about
> Me not being able to share a feeling.

The duet ends in a hilarious standoff, with Susan exclaiming, "Now it's off our chest," and Jonathan joining in for "Now it's 4 A.M. / And we have therapy tomorrow, / It's too late to screw / So let's just get some rest." Larson's sense of his own ridiculousness gives his songs an infectious quality. For instance, "Sugar," a hard-driving rock song, is dedicated to the author's love not of sex or cocaine but of Twinkies, which he buys in bulk as furtively as he once did condoms ("Stressed out / Burned out / Hangin' by a string, / Sugar-Sugar-Sugar—I won't feel a thing"). "Tick, Tick . . . Boom" shows off Larson's idiosyncrasy, energy, and promise. What remains unresolved is whether he could have built on his lyric gifts to tell a proper story. I can't quite bring myself to give him the benefit of the doubt. Still, as a miniature testament to the ructions of his fervent heart, "Tick, Tick . . . Boom" has sinew and a winning sweetness. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

ANIMAL ACTS

Pet rivalries and French mysteries.

BY ANTHONY LANE

Look who's barking: such is the central conceit of "Cats & Dogs," the undemanding wad of fluff that Warner Bros. is pleased to present as its summer contribution to the art of film. Directed by Lawrence Guterman, this is not a cartoon; rather, in the manner of "Babe" and "Stuart Little," it features real beasts racing around and yapping wisecracks, with their lips manipulated, slightly unpleasantly, to cough up the words. (The voice-over artists include Tobey Maguire, Alec Baldwin, and, as a hot saluki bitch, Susan Sarandon.) The whole project is determined to push live action into territory formerly colonized by the cartoon form—as if, after all these years, the camera were still jealous of the pen and the brush, of the elastic liberty that is theirs by right. But why bother? So much cinematic action, whether photographed or animated, is now indebted to computers that the old enmity no longer seems to apply; Jack Warner is sitting right there in Uncle Walt's lap.

Not all the animals you see are real; several of them were also duplicated as puppets, to be pulled and splatted as the occasion requires. The same appears to be true of the resident humans. On a good day, Jeff Goldblum and Elizabeth Perkins both have goofiness to spare, but Guterman allows them barely an inch of comic leeway. Goldblum plays a nutty scientist—now there's an original figure—and Perkins plays his wife, a chirpy working mom with a badge that says "Ask Me a Real Estate Question" pinned to her lapel. (This is one of those movies where the big jokes are lumbering and coarse, and the only funny jokes are the tiny kind that land in the corner of the frame and then blow away.) The couple has a slobbering dog that, in the opening scene, is bundled into a van and never seen again, and a son named Scott (Alexander Pollock), who should have been bundled into any available transport and driven away before principal photography began.

Where do directors find such noisome examples of youth? Pollock is all teeth and freckles; he reminds me of the boy in "Spy Kids," which suggests that, according to the protocol of current blockbusters, children must be made as unappealing as possible, so as not to interfere with the special effects. At one point, perhaps the lowest in my decades of filmgoing, Scott gets to wrestle in softened slow motion with a beagle puppy, on a sunlit lawn, as if the director wished to notify the industry that, should his movie career not pan out, he is more than qualified to shoot commercials for toilet paper or milk. To be fair, the beagle doesn't look too happy about the situation, either. As he is forced, for the twentieth time, to cock his head to one side and lock into Cute Factor 10, you can see a wrinkle of despair pucker his noble snout—a look that says, "Did Snoopy give everything for this?"

"Cats & Dogs" is one of those movies which feature real beasts yapping wisecracks.

The plot, on paper, must have had a certain elegant Snoopishness; we are asked to believe that both cats and dogs are more advanced than us, that dogs have the upper paw just now, and that the cat wishes to reassert his supremacy. From this premise flow a number of gags that verge on inspiration; dogs are smart enough to build underground rocket sleds, for instance, in which they travel to important meetings of a canine council, yet they still lean out of the rockets' windows with their tongues flapping wildly in the wind. Even more credible is the notion that, whenever a human passes, they immediately buckle down to the dumb charades for which we treasure them—digging in the dirt, inspecting each other's rear fenders—and then, when the coast clears, get back to their solemn discussion of the feline threat. What's great about these moments is their insistence on pure doghood, on the extent to which other species not only differ from us but largely disdain us; the problem is that the digital trickery of "Cats & Dogs" works in the opposite direction, forever wanting dogs to be like us. It's as if, toward the climax of "Jaws," the shark had bitten Quint in half, turned to the camera, winked, and whispered, "Yummy." Children will warm to "Cats & Dogs" because it's fast and foolish, but their parents will pick up something vain and lazy in its rush to sentiment, and cat lovers will be reassured that Guterman, who is fine on German shepherds, doesn't have a clue about the holy mysteries of the common tabby. He is, in short, a dog of a director: reckless, indiscriminating, and, although he doesn't know it, pussy-whipped. There is, however, sensational evidence that the studio may have curtailed his artistic freedom; consider the publicity notes for this movie, which state clearly that the cats and dogs involved can be seen performing "marital arts combat." It is my tragic duty to inform you that no such scene occurs.

In the days when sermons were sermons, no minister would miss the chance, in the course of a three-hour diatribe, to remind the cowering members of his congregation that, whatever their plans in life, they would soon be food for worms. In our pallid age, with so few churches prepared to advertise the bracing effects of eternal damnation, it has been left to movie directors and pulp novelists to revel in mortal rot. Take the opening sequence of "The Crimson Rivers," in which the credits float against a backdrop of bugs, beetles, and, yes, worms. They are seen dining on human flesh, and the sight will send some viewers haring up the aisles in disgust; yet it is more than merely disgusting, because the young French director Mathieu Kassovitz keeps the mood so low and slow that you end up feeling not repelled but inexplicably sad, as if you were reading an epitaph on a tomb.

For the first half of the movie, this darkness refuses to lift—helped, perhaps, by the location. Foul deeds are afoot in a craggy backwater of Savoie, where freezing fogs slip off the mountains and hang around like a migraine. Into this sequestered spot comes Commissaire Pierre Niemans (Jean Reno), a veteran of the vice squad. The local captain of police tries to keep things civil. "We've never dealt with you before," he says. Niemans isn't having any of it. "You're lucky," he replies. Lucky because I'm such a gloomy bastard to have around, or lucky because you've never stumbled across anything so depraved that someone like me had to be called in? Well, now is the time. A body has been discovered high on a cliff face, with multiple wounds, no hands, and a strange capacity to weep; the eyes have been removed, and the sockets filled with rain.

At this point, I thought we were in for a serious endeavor; Kassovitz is plainly attuned to the lyricism of the grotesque, and, if watchfulness is required, then Jean Reno is your man. With the body count rising, he just gazes and gives barely perceptible nods, as if saying to himself, "Yes, *this* is as I had feared." The Commissaire never answers a straight question; he seems happier to bathe in the mystery than to clarify it, and, more than once, there are splashes of comic desperation as he wanders around a crime scene saying, "There must be a clue." Even those who frequent French movies for the sake of high spirits will enjoy a stroll through the low variety—a refined glumness, verging on *joie de mourir.* I particularly enjoyed the Shakespearean gravedigger who greets the cops with the merry words "You're here for the desecration."

But that, unfortunately, is that. A movie that kicks off with the promise of deep shadows somehow contrives to end, a hundred minutes later, in brightly lit baloney. The plot ties itself in knots, the lone wolf acquires a buddy named Lieutenant Max Kerkerian (Vincent Cassel), the two of them get into a car chase that makes no sense, the killer is introduced like a homicidal bunny out of a hat, and we go home scratching our heads. What happened? Normally, crumminess grows on a movie like mold, but in "The Crimson Rivers" I can direct you to the precise moment of decline. It comes when Max visits a skinhead hangout and, instead of asking for information, goes into a *karate routine.* Kassovitz is probably the least insular filmmaker in France, but, in this case, his urge to break the rules of French restraint has led him into dire indecision; "The Crimson Rivers" tries to keep one eye on placid European creepiness and another on the international market—hence, presumably, the gang of cops pulling guns on one another, and the late cameo appearance of an avalanche. The rivers themselves, incidentally, are an ancient ethnographic image meaning "lots and lots of blood." ♦

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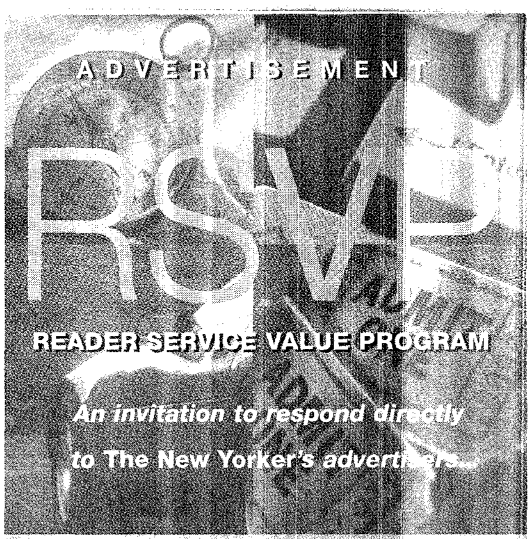
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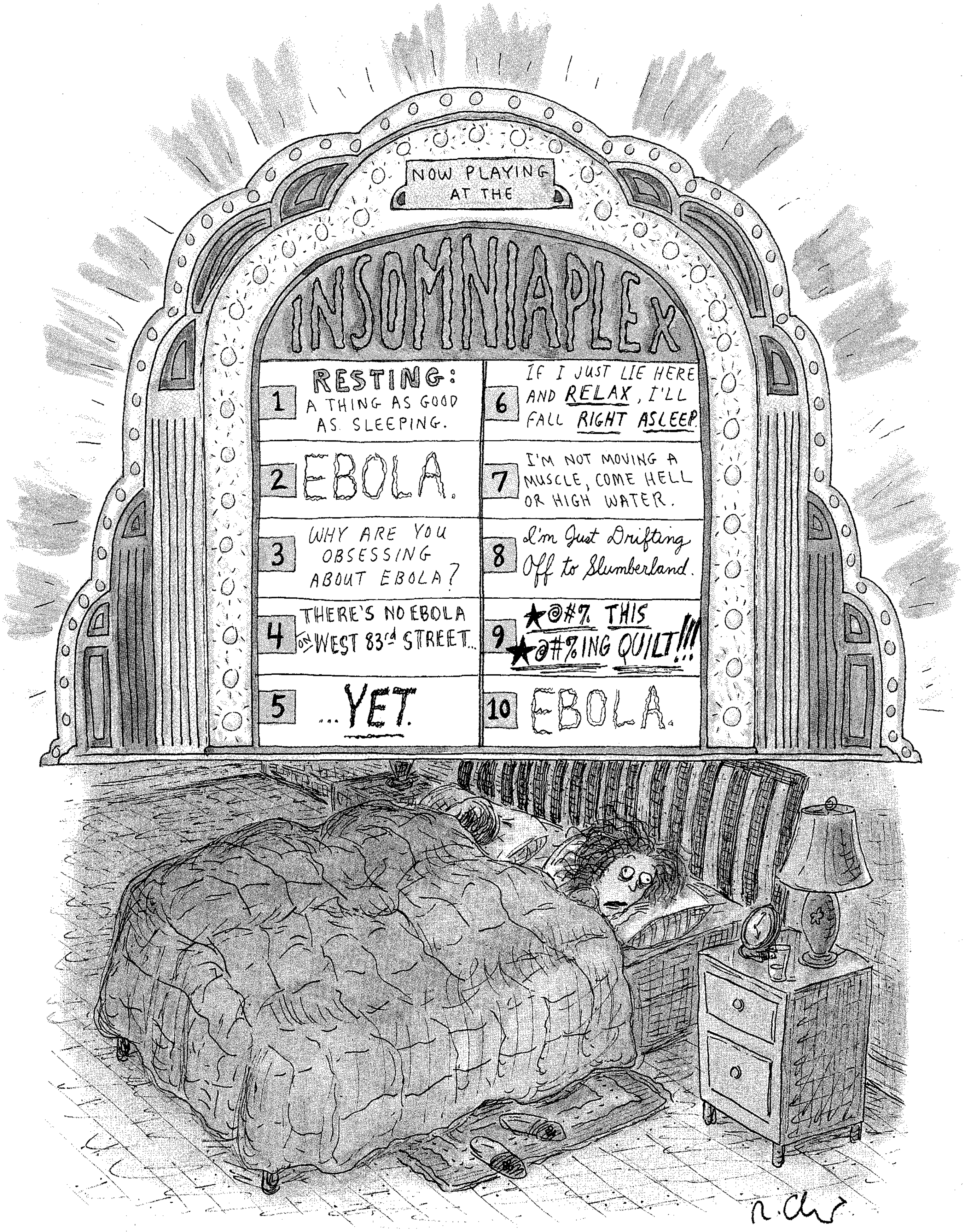
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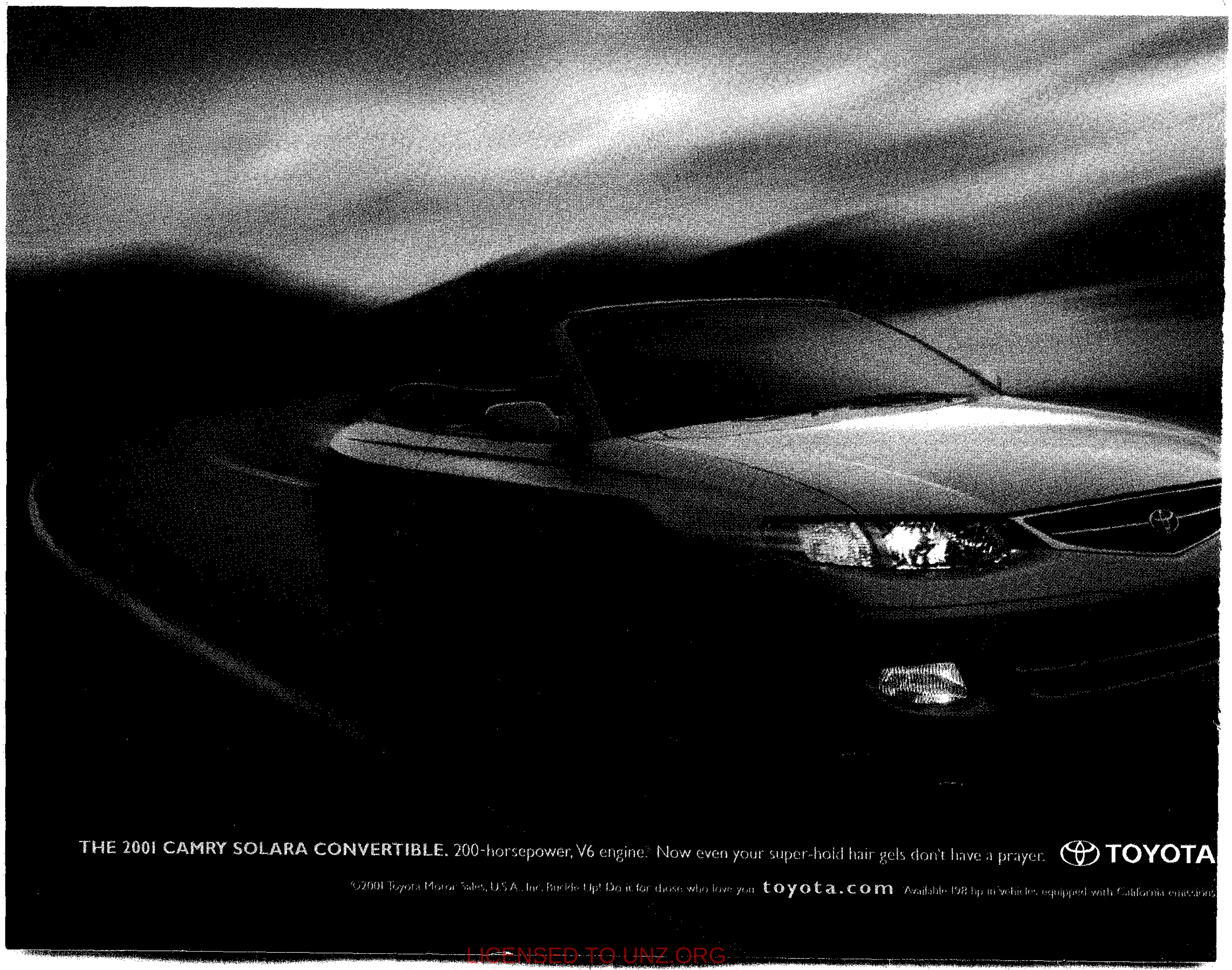

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